

U.S. seeks to consolidate Kurdish truce

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau held meetings with representatives of Iraq's Kurdish parties to consolidate the ceasefire between them, the State Department said Thursday. spokesman Nicholas Burns said Mr. Pelletreau had met with delegations from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and its rival the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) but party leaders were not present. The two signed a ceasefire accord at the end of October after their fragile power-sharing agreement broke down into armed conflict in May 1994. An estimated 2,500 people have been killed in the ensuing fighting. The subject of the talks, said Mr. Burns, was to "maintain stability in northern Iraq, make sure that (Iraqi President) Saddam's influence is severely limited, and promote some kind of a reconciliation between these two Kurdish groups."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Arab Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

U.S. warns nationals in Cyprus

NICOSIA (R) — The United States has told its nationals in Cyprus to be on the watch for suspicious parcels or letters after letter bombs which might have been sent from Egypt reached Washington last week. "We have sent letters to nationals telling them to be careful of letters and parcels and to contact police or the embassy if they suspect anything," a spokesman for the U.S. embassy in the island said on Friday. He said the warning, issued on Tuesday, was just a precautionary measure. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) says five of the letter bombs were found in Washington and three in the area around Leavenworth, Kansas, the site of a federal prison holding one of the men convicted for the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York in 1993. The Washington bombs were addressed to the offices of Al Hayat, a newspaper leased to Saudi Prince Khalid Ben Sultan. Four bombs were found at Al Hayat's offices and the fifth turned up at the city post office.

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Prince Hassan calls for broad concept of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation to include Gulf

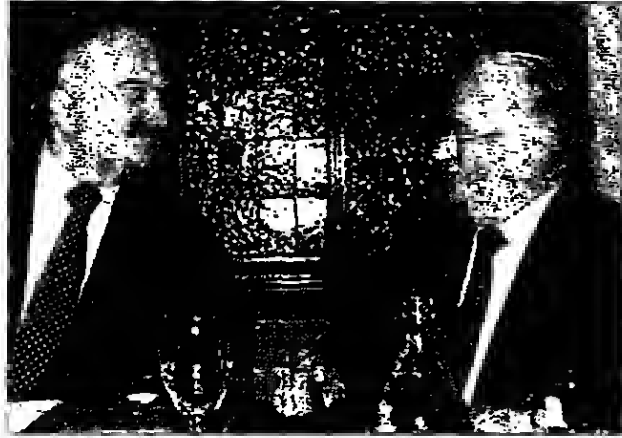
Crown Prince receives Science and Society Prize

From Ayman Al Safadi in Madrid

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Friday stressed the need for the articulation of a broad and concept of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation which will include the Gulf area as a natural extension of the East Mediterranean region in cultural, economic and demographic terms.

In a keynote address to the Mediterranean Charter Group convention, Prince Hassan noted the overlapping networks between the Euro-Mediterranean and the East-Mediterranean-Gulf frameworks.

"The East Mediterranean does not end in a cul-de-sac in the Levant. As our history demonstrates, our region extends to the Gulf and to the east beyond. In terms of people as well as ideas and culture," Prince Hassan told the meeting, which is



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Friday talks with former Colombian President Belisario Betancur during the opening of a meeting of the Mediterranean Charter Group in Madrid, Spain, on Friday (AFP photo)

scheduled to endorse the Mediterranean Charter on non-governmental cooperation between Europe and Mediterranean basin countries.

"The security of the Gulf and the East Mediterranean is inter-linked," stressed

the Crown Prince, who arrived here Thursday.

After addressing the Mediterranean group meeting, Prince Hassan received the 1995 Science and Society Prize from the Spanish Science and Society Institute.

The prize, awarded to Prince Hassan in recognition of his efforts in promoting inter-cultural dialogue and peace-building as well as developing a new humanitarian order, was presented by Chairman of the Institute Princess Elena de Borbon.

In an address after receiving the prize, Prince Hassan said that development, human rights and peace, the areas with which the prize is concerned, are fundamentally inter-connected and lie at the heart of the common future.

In all the efforts taken in the areas of peace-building, the development of a new humanitarian order or the protection of the environment, said the Crown Prince, "it is the quality of life of the individual being that we are ultimately seeking to improve."

(Continued on page 7)

Princess Sarvath reviews JRCS work

MADRID — Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath, the honorary vice president of the Jordanian Red Crescent Society, Friday held talks with president of the Spanish Red Cross Society Juan Manuel Del Toro Rivero over means of enhancing cooperation between the two societies.

During the meeting, which was also attended by members of the board of the Spanish Red Cross, Mr. Rivero briefed Princess Sarvath on the activities of the society and expressed readiness for cooperation with JRCS.

Princess Sarvath stressed the centrality of Jordan's role in the area and the major role the JRCS plays on both the national and regional levels.

Princess Sarvath, who drew similarities between the activities of the JRCS and the Spanish Red Cross, expressed interest in the training programmes of the Spanish Red Cross and pointed to the importance of involving the youth in voluntary relief work undertaken by the Red Cross and the Red Crescent societies.

Princess Sarvath, who is a accompanying His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on a two-day working visit to the Spanish capital, stressed the need for a multicultural approach in the disaster prevention studies programme.

The Princess pointed to the need for individual accidents to be included in the larger picture of relief efforts.

Princess Sarvath said the Spanish Red Cross and the JRCS can cooperate in the areas of human resources development and technical training.

Tel Aviv blasts add new tension to Hebron talks

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel toughened the tone Friday in an already tense negotiating stand-off with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) after two pipe bombs wounded 13 people in Tel Aviv the previous night.

Police remained cautious about attributing responsibility for the double bombing, saying Palestinian militants were suspected in the unclaimed attack but that they could not yet rule out a criminal motive.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was less reticent, saying he was "almost certain" the blasts were the work of Palestinian militants and warning that such attacks threatened the peace process.

"These terrorist attacks reinforce even more our determination to demand security guarantees," he said, referring to ongoing negotiations on extending Palestinian rule to the West Bank city of Hebron and beyond.

"We are going to pursue these terrorists. If it turns out that the terrorists came from the area controlled by the Palestinian authority, we will not treat this as business as usual ... Israel will react with the greatest severity," Mr. Netanyahu said.

"We cannot have peace if we have terrorism, we cannot have peace if the people cannot walk the streets of Tel Aviv safely," he said.

But in the absence of clear evidence pointing to the Palestinians, Mr. Netanyahu did not break off negotiations over extending self-rule in the West Bank nor did the army impose a closure on Palestinian territories, reactions which have been almost automatic following bomb attacks in the past.

Mr. Arafat made no statement before he left Friday for a 24-hour visit to Paris.

But his spokesman said the PNA had no connection to or interest in such anti-Israeli attacks.

Meanwhile the U.S.-medi-

Arafat: Mideast peace at risk

PARIS (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat warned Friday that the Middle East peace process was in danger of collapse, as he met his "close friend" former Israeli Premier Shimon Peres, at a conference in Paris.

Warmly embracing his former partner in hammering out the Oslo peace accords, he accused his right-wing successor, Benjamin Netanyahu, of being stubborn.

"The results of the last elections in Israel have put the whole peace process in danger and threaten the collapse of steps still to come," Mr. Arafat told a conference staged at United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) headquarters in honour of the late French President Francois Mitterrand.

"We have had to confront a new attitude with new dangers in the form of extremism and obstinacy," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres, key architects of the Middle East peace process, embraced and posed for photographers as they arrived for the symposium.

Mr. Peres paid tribute to both his former partner and Mitterrand, who died a year ago. "The fact that Yasser Arafat and myself are present today, not as enemies but as friends, is a great testimony ... to Francois Mitterrand."

Mr. Arafat also lauded Mitterrand, but used his address to openly attack Mr. Netanyahu. "The maintenance and even strengthening of the policy of building new settlements is transforming the principle of land-for-peace into an empty slogan," he said.

"We alert the world to what is happening in our country. Peace is in danger and it is imperative to act quickly to save a peace process threatened with collapse."

In travelling to France from Gaza City, Mr. Arafat also put tense negotiations with Israel over the future of the peace process on hold.

During his brief visit Mr. Arafat was also due to meet with French President Jacques Chirac before leaving for Cairo later in the evening. It was to be their sixth meeting since Mr. Chirac took office in May 1995.

ated negotiations on Hebron continued with top Arafat deputy Mahmoud Abbas and chief negotiator Saeb Erakat due to meet later Friday with U.S. special Mideast envoy Dennis Ross.

Even before the bombings, the Hebron talks stalled this week over Palestinian insistence that Mr. Netanyahu respect an already agreed upon timetable and withdraw Israeli troops from most of the West Bank by September this year.

Mr. Netanyahu wants the post-Hebron redeployments dragged out until May 1999 — when the two sides are due to complete a final stage of negotiations on a permanent peace settlement — and Mr. Ross has offered a compromise date of late 1998, a propos-

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Muslims pray at the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in Arab East Jerusalem on Friday, the first day of Ramadan. In addition to the usual prayers, a special prayer was held for rains in view of an unusual dry weather in the region (AFP photo)

Ramadan begins in most Muslim countries

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan, along with the bulk of the Islamic World, on Friday observed the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan, traditionally a time of abstinence by day and shorter working hours.

During Ramadan the faithful should not eat, drink or smoke in daylight hours. Non-Muslims in Islamic countries are asked to be sensitive by not doing those things in public.

All liquor shops, bars and nightclubs remain closed throughout the month, and sensual pleasures such as sex and listening to music are also banned during the day.

In Saudi Arabia, birthplace of Islam and home to its two holiest shrines, the Interior Ministry warned non-Muslims to respect the Holy Month. It said foreigners eating, drinking or smoking in public during daylight hours would risk deportation and cancellation of their work contracts.

Saudi Arabia has a large expatriate population, many of them labourers from the Indian subcontinent and other Asian states.

The start of the Ramadan usually depends on when the crescent of the new moon is sighted in each country.

Other major Muslim countries where Ramadan started on Friday include the five other Gulf Arab states as well as Iraq, Yemen, Indonesia, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon and most of the Islamic countries in the Maghreb.

In Iran, across the Gulf from Saudi Arabia and the largest country dominated by the minority Shi'ite sect of Islam, Ramadan was set to start on Saturday, provided the new moon was sighted on Friday evening.

The end of Ramadan is marked by the religious feast of 'Eid Al Fitr.

Opponents of Israeli trade exhibition protest against event with prayers

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Nearly 1,500 people performed prayers near the site of an Israeli trade exhibition on Friday and dispersed peacefully thereafter in a protest action called by opponents of the convening of the Israeli event in Jordan.

Deputies representing the Islamic Action Front (IAF) party led the worshippers, who gathered under the watchful eye of security forces and riot policemen.

The prayers passed without incident after several speakers addressed the crowd and IAF Deputy Hamzeh Mansour called on the faithful to disperse peacefully.

Meanwhile the call for a "national strike" to protest the convening of the Israeli trade exhibition appeared to have had little impact except in courts, where many lawyers stayed away from work, local reports said Friday.

The four-day trade exhibition, which opened on Wednesday despite protests by opposition political par-

ties and trade unions, concludes on Saturday, but it did not draw a large audience as expected, sources said.

The protest campaign against the Israeli exhibition is led by a self-styled "national committee for cancelling the Israeli trade fair." The committee is headed by former Prime Minister Ahmad Obaidat and includes representatives of trade unions and professional associations.

An effort by the committee to physically prevent visitors from the exhibition did not have much impact on Wednesday and the protest action ended after six hours.

The committee then called for the three-day national strike. But there was no indication that the call had had a strong impact.

A report in the local press said lawyers stayed away from attending courts on Wednesday, and less than 300 people were seen gathered at the Professional Associations Complex for a meeting called by the national committee.

But organisers insisted the protest was a success.

"Thousands phoned us declaring their support of the action," Ali Abu Sukar, head of the "anti-Israeli Normalisation Committee" in the Islamist-dominated 37,000-strong Jordan Engineers Association, was quoted as saying by Reuters.

Mr. Abu Sukar told Reuters that campaigners against the fair had retreated from the three-day stoppage call after "our aims were met."

Meanwhile the exhibition itself did not have many visitors, and Israelis said the staunch opposition to the exhibition was likely to chill business relations between the two countries.

Inside the blue bazaar housing the show, representatives of Israeli firms drank coffee and chatted with each other as security men walked through the area, the Associated Press reported.

"Israeli firms will be afraid to come and do business in Jordan in view of

(Continued on page 7)

Syria rejects Islamic group's claim of Damascus bombing

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria on Friday dismissed a claim by a pro-Iranian Islamist group that it carried out a bus attack in Damascus to avenge the execution in Syria of one of its militants.

The claim by the Islamic Movement for Change was an attempt to deflect attention away from the "real people responsible, Israel, on to another party, Islamic or otherwise," a Syrian official told AFP.

The movement, which has previously claimed two anti-U.S. attacks in Saudi Arabia, said in a statement that it had caused the explosion of a "military bus" in Damascus.

The statement received by AFP from the group, which claims to defend the interests of minority Shiites in Arab countries, did not give the date of the attack.

Syria has repeatedly blamed Israel's secret service Mossad for a bomb attack on a bus in Damascus on Dec. 31 which killed 13 people and injured another 40. Israel denies

any involvement. The Islamic Movement for Change said the operation was aimed at avenging Sheikh Jaafar Qassem Al Chuweikhat, one of its militants said to have been involved in an attack against a U.S. base in Saudi Arabia in June.

The truck bombing in June of a U.S. military housing complex in Dhahran killed 19 U.S. air force personnel.

The Islamic Movement said that Chuweikhat was later executed in Syria, where he had taken refuge.

"The group ... has shown once again that it has long arms and has led an operation to blow up a Syrian military bus in the heart of Damascus, killing and injuring all the occupants," the statement said.

The Islamic Movement for Change accused Syria of repeatedly betraying Iran, particularly when Damascus joined several Gulf Arab nations in condemning a military build-up by Tehran on three disputed Gulf islands.

There was no way to independently verify the claims in the communiqué, faxed Thursday to a Western news agency in Cyprus.

The Islamic Movement for Change is among several shadowy groups that have issued statements opposing the American military presence in Saudi Arabia, but U.S. authorities have said they do not even know if such organisations exist.

The group claimed responsibility for a November 1995 explosion in Saudi Arabia that killed seven people, including five Americans, and it issued a threat against U.S. interests in the kingdom after the Dhahran blast. But it is not known to have claimed responsibility for that explosion.

News reports in the Middle East have suggested the Saudis have contacted both Syria and Iran about suspects who may have fled to those countries.

(Continued on page 7)

U.S., Israel said amenable to EU Middle East role

PARIS (R) — The United States and Israel are dropping their opposition to European Union (EU) plans to play a bigger role in reviving Middle East peace talks, Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo says.

Mr. Van Mierlo, whose country took over the rotating EU presidency on Jan. 1, said after talks with French Foreign Minister Herve De Charette in Paris that there was an "absolute necessity" for the EU to play a major part in the Middle East.

"The hesitations of the Americans and of the Israeli government have more or less disappeared. They see that without Europe it's very much more difficult to come to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East," he told reporters.

"They also see that it's not appropriate to make a distinction between a political role and an economic role," he said during a tour of EU capitals to outline Dutch priorities for its six-month presidency.

Europe is the main paymaster of the peace process while the United States has led efforts for a political deal.

Palestinians on Thursday rejected a U.S. compromise date for Israeli troop withdrawals in the West Bank, insisting Washington make Israel respect the original timetable. The rejection was a new blow to the peace mission of U.S. envoy Dennis Ross.

"Stimulated by French policy, we finally jumped on the scene in the Middle East and that was the right decision," Mr. Van Mierlo said.

French President Jacques Chirac visited the Middle East in October and urged Europe to be accepted as a co-sponsor of the peace process alongside the United States, a demand rejected

by Israel. He also urged creation of a Palestinian state.

On Friday, Mr. Chirac was to meet Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat who is due in Paris to address a U.N. seminar.

Mr. Van Mierlo did not say exactly what an EU role might be.

The EU's Middle East envoy, Miguel Angel Moratinos, who met Mr. Van Mierlo and Mr. De Charette on Thursday, said Europe could play a role in reviving the confidence that led to the signing of landmark 1993 Palestinian-Israeli peace deals. "The top priority (for Europe) is to recover mutual confidence between Palestinians and Israelis," he told a news conference.

Mr. Moratinos, a Spaniard appointed last year, said Europe would complement rather than rival U.S. peace efforts. He referred to Mr. Ross as "my friend."

But Mr. Moratinos said he had grown sceptical of a quick deal on the date for an Israeli troop pullout from the West Bank town of Hebron, a flashpoint of Israeli-Arab violence and home to some 420 Jewish settlers and more than 120,000 Palestinians.

"This is the first time that I'm going to say that (a deal) isn't imminent...for three months I've been saying that it's imminent so I prefer to say today that it won't be imminent and maybe tomorrow I'll be surprised," he said.

He added that he did not believe the region could slip towards war. "The situation can get worse but I don't believe in a generalised war in the region," he said.



PROTEST PRAYERS: Islamist Deputy Hamam Saeed on Friday leads prayers near the site of an Israeli trade exhibition to protest the convening of the Israeli event (see story on page 1) (AFP photo)

Former Shin Bet head says he ordered killings

TEL AVIV (R) — The former head of Israel's Shin Bet secret service admitted in an interview published on Friday ordering the killing of two captured in 1984.

"I gave an order to give them a few more blows and get it over with," said Avraham Shalom, who resigned after a failed cover-up.

Mr. Shalom told Yedioth Achronoth newspaper he consulted then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir on "every step." But he did not say that Mr. Shamir had ordered the killing of the Palestinian who were photographed being taken away alive by police from the bus they had hijacked. "I worked with Shamir. Everything I did, I asked Shamir first," Mr. Shalom told author Yechiel Guttman, who has only now published the interview conducted four years ago.

Last July, a senior Shin Bet

agent told Yedioth Achronoth he killed the two hijackers on Shalom's orders, using a stone to crush their skulls. The office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said later the agent, Ehud Yatom, denied making the comments to the newspaper.

Israeli commandos raided the bus in April 1984 after four Palestinian hijackers threatened to kill passengers. Two of the hijackers and an Israeli passenger were killed.

Israeli officials said at the time the other two hijackers died of their wounds in custody. But newspaper photographs published later in defiance of military censorship showed they were unhurt. This prompted a series of inquiries that revealed a Shin Bet cover-up. Mr. Shalom and three other top officials resigned from the agency and along with seven other agents received presidential pardons.

Ashrawi looks for push from Albright

WASHINGTON (R) — A Palestinian government minister on Thursday urged the new Clinton administration to give a fresh push to slow-moving Middle East peace talks and boost its involvement to avoid a new cycle of conflict.

Ms. Ashrawi, the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) minister of higher education, stopped short of direct criticism of current U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross but said key issues "must not be left to third and fourth level decision makers."

Ms. Ashrawi was speaking in Washington as Israeli-Palestinian talks, mediated by Mr. Ross, dragged on over the West Bank town of Hebron. Palestinians Thursday turned down a U.S. compromise date for Israeli troop withdrawals in the West Bank.

"We feel now that...the way in which the talks are being conducted must be revitalised, and it is essential that third party involvement be effective, are neutral and are in the service of peace and not biased in the service of one side or the other," Ms. Ashrawi told a news conference.

"We feel that with this new administration, the peace process should be not just at the top of the agenda, but there should be higher level active involvement," she said.

"Given the fact that there is a new secretary of state, we are hoping that American policy...will try to work out

mechanisms of participation in a way that would bring the parties to comply" with past agreements.

Madeleine Albright will replace Warren Christopher Jan. 20 as secretary of state if confirmed by the Senate. At a confirmation hearing Wednesday, she refused to answer Middle East questions in detail, citing the Ross mission.

Ms. Ashrawi said Israeli policies were creating a "pressure cooker effect" among Palestinians. She urged that "all parties should view this situation with the utmost seriousness any attempt to bring Israel to its senses, otherwise it will be plunging us back into a cycle of confrontation and conflict."

"We feel that (U.S.) decision making has to be at the highest level of foreign policy as well as the executive level, and should not be left to the level of mediators or the peace team," she added.

Ms. Ashrawi, a former spokeswoman for Palestinian negotiators, told Reuters later it was possible she would meet U.S. officials while she was in Washington, but no meetings had been arranged. Ms. Ashrawi denied claims in a Washington Times interview Thursday by Israeli ambassador to the United States Eliahu Ben Elissar that Egypt was encouraging the Palestinians to stall on a Hebron accord.

"No country, including the Palestinians, would take instructions from anybody else," she said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli army to open Internet site

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli army plans to open a site on the Internet to provide information to youths about to be drafted for mandatory military service, army officials said Friday. The site, to be called "Tsahal-Net" after the Hebrew acronym for the Israel defence forces, will answer questions about call-up dates and how to apply for entry into specific army units, the officials said. The site, in Hebrew, will be opened in the next two months and will also provide information to army reservists, they said.

Iran builds one of world's smallest choppers

TEHRAN (R) — Iran has built a locally designed helicopter called the "Dragonfly" which it said was among the world's smallest, a newspaper reported on Thursday. The daily Iran newspaper said prototypes of the two-seater "Sanjaqak (dragonfly)", weighing 450 kilograms, were being built and would undergo flight tests at a state research centre in the central province of Esfahan. It quoted Iran's Ministry of Construction Jihad, with which the centre is affiliated, as saying the helicopter was "among the smallest in the world". Iran said in August its first locally designed helicopter, a six-seater, had passed flight tests at a government industrial development centre in the southern city of Shiraz. In October, Tehran said a Revolutionary Guards research centre in Esfahan had designed a four-seat helicopter. Facing United States sanctions, and confronted with a Western arms embargo since the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, Tehran has embarked on a strategy of developing military and civilian hardware which it cannot easily obtain from abroad. The self-sufficiency efforts also aim to limit imports at a time when the country needs to save hard currency to pay back a large foreign debt.

Police learn about 'lying' from Mrs. Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli police, learning how to tell when a suspect is lying, are studying a television interview with the country's first lady Sara Netanyahu, says an expert who lectures the police. Gavriel Raam, a self-described expert on non-verbal signals, told Reuters on Thursday he uses the interview with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's wife because he said her facial expressions indicate "she is trying to hide something." Shai Bazak, the prime minister's spokesman, dismissed "as nonsense" the report of the special police training, first published on Thursday in Israel's newspaper Haaretz. "I don't want to comment on that," he told Reuters. In the interview with Israel's Channel Two television last July, Mrs. Netanyahu was asked about her widely publicised dismissal of her children's nanny. The nanny told the press she was humiliated before being tossed out of the house. "Asked if the nanny scandal bothered her, Sara said no. But at the same moment she swallowed her lower lip. When a person says a word and swallows their lip it means they have a problem with what they just said," Mr. Raam said.

Erbakan says report seeks state-gang scandal probe

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan said on Thursday a prime ministry report had called for another 35 people to be investigated over a scandal about links between the state and underworld gangs.

"The decision was made to open an investigation into 35 more people alongside those already being investigated," Mr. Erbakan told reporters after meeting President Suleyman Demirel. He did not say how many were already being investigated.

Mr. Erbakan commissioned the report seven weeks ago following a car crash in which a wanted gangster, Abdullah Catli, and a leading policeman died in the same car.

Sedat Bucak, a government deputy leading a Kurdish clan paid by the state to fight separatist Kurdish rebels, was in the car but escaped with minor

injuries. The report has been passed to the Justice Ministry which will decide what legal action to take. Mr. Erbakan said. He said the Justice Ministry would make a statement about the report, which also called for 85 people to be questioned.

A parliamentary commission is also expected to produce a report on the incident after a four-month investigation.

In December, the Justice Ministry rejected a prosecutor's report calling for lifting Deputy Mehmet Agar's parliamentary immunity in connection with the crash.

Mr. Agar quit as interior minister in November and was subsequently accused of having signed a false police identity document for Catli, who was allegedly used by officials to kill Turkey's political opponents.

Israel seeking to upgrade Greek warplanes — report

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel is seeking a contract to upgrade 40 Greek F-4 fighter jets in a deal similar to one signed with Athens's rival Turkey, Israeli press reports Friday quoted officials as saying.

The deal was discussed during a two-day visit to Athens this week by the head of the Israeli air force, General Eitan Ben-Elizah, the reports said.

Gen. Ben-Elizah was in Greece Wednesday and Thursday to discuss implementation of a 1994 Israeli-Greek military pact which has yet to be carried out.

The agreement, similar to one signed with Turkey last year, calls for joint naval and air exercises and rescue operations.

During his visit, Gen. Ben-Elizah met with Defence Minister AKIS Tsolatzopoulos, Air Force Chief George Antonellis and other officials.

Details of his visit were being kept secret although Israel officials had confirmed privately that the deal to

upgrade the Greek Phantom fighters was among the topics discussed.

The negotiations were being kept under low profile to avoid damaging Israeli efforts to develop military ties with Turkey — notably completion of a \$650 million deal to upgrade 54 F-4 jets — at a time when those ties are under question due to the arrival in power in Ankara of a government dominated by the Islamic Welfare Party.

Greece and Turkey, though both members of NATO, have a long history of tense rivalry, notably since Turkey invaded and occupied the northern half of Cyprus in 1974.

"Now after many years of efforts we expect any week the arrival of the first Turkish F-4s," one Israeli official told the Jerusalem Post.

"From a political point of view, a commercial, a business and a marketing point of view, we would not want to jeopardise this deal that has been eleven-and-a-half years in the making," he said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

13:05 Min. Alhadi Al-Mohammadi

13:35 Caravan

14:00 Chris Cross

15:00 Feature Film — The Case of the Witch Who Wasn't

15:30 Madeline Langlois & Steven Galtby

16:30 Call For Prayer And Hilarious With Channel One

17:30 Muppet Show

18:00 French Programme Series — Jack

19:00 Le Journal

19:15 Magazine — Ziva

19:30 News Headlines

19:35 Comedy (Hanging with Mr. Cooper)

20:02 Oriental Rugs (Documentary)

20:30 Prism

21:00 Low & Clark — The New Adventures of Superman

22:00 News In English

22:25 Journey Into Islam

23:00 McGyver

23:50 Classic Movie — Julius Caesar Starring: Mark Brando & James Mayson

01:15 Ramadan Talks

PRAYER TIMES

05:11 Fajr

06:32 Sunrise Doha

12:32 Dhuhir

14:31 Asr

16:54 Maghreb

18:18 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweilich, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661656

Terrassanta Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking

Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Relative warm weather conditions will prevail with clouds appearing at different altitudes

and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. 05/18

Aqaba 10/25

Deserts 03/19

Jordan Valley 10/24

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 17, Aqaba 23 Humidity readings: Amman 54 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Hassan Mansour750197

Dr. Afif Shukri898863

Dr. Khalil Ramadan774397

Dr. Osama Al Hissani 847289

Firas pharmacy661912

Ferdows pharmacy778336

Al Asema pharmacy637055

Nairoukh pharmacy623672

Al Salam pharmacy636730

Yacoub pharmacy644945

Shmeisani pharmacy637660

Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID: Dr. Ahmad Qanu281484

Al Quds pharmacy(—)

ZARQA: Dr. Rafeh Attallah994424

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111

Civil Defence Department661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Department630321

Hotel Complaints605800

Price Complaints661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints897467

Amman Municipality Complaints787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs661101

Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority680100

Jordan Electricity Authority815615

Electric Power Company636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn644281/6

Akileh Maternity, J. Amn642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity642362

Malhas, J. Amman636140

Palestine, Shmeisani607071

Shmeisani Hospital669131

University Hospital845845

Al-Mousher Hospital66727/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrawi775111/26

Army, Marka891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199

ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital(09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986732

Al Hikam Modern Hospital(09)990990

IRBID: Princess Basma Hospital(02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital(02)272275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital(02)247100

AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (08) 52700 or (08) 523250.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

08:55 Damascus (RJ)

09:45 New Delhi (RJ)

09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)

Serbian police yield to student street party

BELGRADE (R) — Thousands of jubilant Serbian opposition supporters streamed onto the streets of Belgrade in the early hours of Friday after a student street party persuaded police to dismantle their cordons.

The police hacked down from a 12-hour standoff with students who had vowed to stand in front of police lines until they were allowed to march.

Singing and dancing demonstrators then roamed city boulevards, rejoicing despite the overnight cold.

"This is a great thing happening tonight. This is our chance to change the future and we'll do it," said one woman among the crowds who have turned out for nearly eight weeks to demonstrate against autocratic President Slobodan Milosevic.

Thursday was the 53rd straight day of protests in various Serbian cities against the cancellation of municipal election results by Mr. Milosevic's Socialist Party (SPS) last November.

Mr. Milosevic Wednesday conceded the opposition Zajedno (Together) Coalition had won in Serbia's second city Nis.

But Zajedno leaders

vowed protests would continue until all their claims were met. They urged Belgraders to drive en masse into the city centre at 2 p.m. (1300 GMT) Friday to create a "traffic collapse," as they did last Sunday.

The government banned protest marches after clashes between pro-government and opposition demonstrators on Dec. 24. But the edict, only intermittently enforced on some days and rigorously on others, seemed to fall apart Thursday night.

Teams of whistle-blowing students played cat and mouse with police cordons in central Belgrade Thursday afternoon.

As soon as one cordon broke up, students would start moving but a fresh police blockade would spring up somewhere else.

By late evening, they were confined to a side street where they danced to music blaring from a public address system. Supporters brought tea, coffee, cigarettes and sandwiches.

Police manning the cordon apparently got orders to leave and the demonstrators were free to roam Belgrade's streets.

Food and drinks were offered to police cordons and

some officers accepted. Students chanted, "let's play hide-and-seek" and "we're having good fun."

A young woman walked back and forth along one cordon carrying a poster reading, "unmarried women, assault the cordon," drawing grins from police.

Witnesses said several people were injured when a car ploughed into the column of demonstrators but it was not clear how it happened.

Cold and tired, most demonstrators went home in the early hours. But a group of about 50 students went to the Serbian government building and at 8:30 a.m. (0730 GMT) handed over a letter demanding an order withdrawing police from the streets.

Watched by police, the students stayed on the pavement and avoided blocking the street. Passing traffic hooted in support.

The United States said Thursday Mr. Milosevic's recognition of Zajedno's victory in Nis did not go far enough and he could not win world applause by "dribbling out minor concessions."

"The Serbian government does not have the right to grant the opposition victo-

ries that the opposition won on its own in elections," said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State John Kornblum has begun a trip to the Hague, Brussels, Sarajevo and Zagreb to discuss issues pertaining to former Yugoslavia including Bosnia's postwar reconstruction and the political crisis in Serbia.

His itinerary deliberately excluded Belgrade.

After a regular meeting of U.S. and European Union Foreign Ministry officials in the Dutch capital, he will join a meeting in Brussels of the contact group on ex-Yugoslavia, made up of the United States, France, Britain, Germany and Russia.

Paul Poudade, director for Continental Europe at the French Foreign Ministry, had talks with a deputy Yugoslav foreign minister in Belgrade Friday. No details were released.

Diplomats said Mr. Poudade's main purpose was to urge Mr. Milosevic to heed an Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) mission's confirmation of the opposition wins.

Mr. Poudade planned to meet Zoran Djindjic, a leader of Zajedno, in Belgrade Friday.



The leader of the opposition coalition Zajedno Vuk Draskovic makes the Serbian three-fingers victory sign during a protest against election rigging in Belgrade Thursday. Belgrade police appeared to have backed off from a showdown Thursday and dismantled a cordon line facing Serbian student protesters who had vowed not to leave until the police did (Reuters photo)

Solana, U.S. officials discuss Russia

WASHINGTON (R) — NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana met President Bill Clinton and other top U.S. officials Thursday and discussed efforts to forge a special relationship between the alliance and Russia.

Mr. Solana later told reporters he hoped to make progress during a visit to Moscow beginning Jan. 19 for talks on a proposed new charter between Russia and the Western alliance, stressing that "it is not an easy process."

"I hope to make progress" in Moscow, Mr. Solana said at a Pentagon photo opportunity with Defence Secretary William Perry. "It is not an easy process, but with tenacity, with good will, I am sure we will be able to overcome the difficulties and have something on track before the summit."

He referred to a summit meeting of NATO leaders in July.

Russia has raised strong objections to the alliance's plan to accept new member states from Eastern and Central Europe and is demanding participation in future NATO decisions on key issues that affect Moscow's security.

The White House said Thursday Mr. Clinton sent a get-well note to Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who was admitted to hospital with early symptoms of pneumonia Wednesday.

White House spokesman Mike McCurry said the note extended the best wishes of Mr. Clinton and his wife, Hillary, for a speedy recovery.

A senior U.S. official said the White House meeting was focused mostly on plans for a special relationship between Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) ahead of Mr. Solana's trip to Moscow for talks with Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov.

The U.S. official said the plans for the special relationship were not yet at the stage of writing a draft charter.

"We believe that the Russian Federation has a definite role to play in the security architecture of Europe in the post-cold war era, and we think that because NATO is the linchpin of our security... Formalising a relationship between Europe and Russia will bring greater security and stability to the continent," the official said.

Kremlin hints that Yeltsin's pneumonia could worsen

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Kremlin indicated Friday that President Boris Yeltsin's bout of pneumonia may still worsen, amid reports that his condition is more serious than previously admitted as he spent a third day in hospital.

"According to his doctors it is too early to say that the illness has peaked," a Kremlin statement said.

However, Mr. Yeltsin was examined early Friday and found to be "breathing more easily" and coughing less, the statement said. His temperature and blood pressure were stable.

A source at the Central Clinical Hospital, where Mr. Yeltsin was being treated, told Echo Moscow radio that Yeltsin was suffering from relatively serious pneumonia in both lungs.

The Kremlin neither confirmed nor denied the report.

Mr. Yeltsin, who returned to work on Dec. 23 after recuperating from quintuple heart bypass surgery on Nov. 5, was hospitalised Wednesday for what the Kremlin said at first was a "bad cold."

Officials later said they had detected signs of pneumonia, but that Mr. Yeltsin, who turns 66 next month, was not in danger.

Echo Moscow's hospital source said that Mr. Yeltsin's double pneumonia was diagnosed Wednesday and that he would need to spend at least a week in hospital.

Mr. Yeltsin probably began developing pneumonia

as early as Jan. 4, but despite doctors' advice he went ahead with a government meeting on Jan. 6 to discuss Russia's position on NATO expansion into Eastern Europe, the medical source said.

Mr. Yeltsin's temperature was being kept artificially low by doctors, he added.

Alexander Gagan, a general practitioner at the Russian Academy of Sciences Polyclinic, told AFP that a double pneumonia was "without doubt a great risk to his life."

At least two weeks in hospital and two weeks of recovery will be needed, he said.

The political damage may be even harder to cure.

Mr. Yeltsin had been hoping to relaunch his presidency after more than a year which included three heart attacks and frequent absences from work.

He immediately entered a busy programme of meeting foreign leaders to reassert authority.

But opponents have described his latest health setback — and the indications that it may be more serious than the Kremlin is admitting — as Mr. Yeltsin's political death.

Alexander Lebed, sacked by Mr. Yeltsin as national security adviser, has taken advantage of the development to push his campaign for the presidency.

He publicly called for Mr. Yeltsin's resignation, accusing him of being unfit to govern, and Thursday he announced: "I am ready to

win these elections."

If Yeltsin were to die or step down, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin would take over as acting president while new elections were organised within three months.

Mr. Chernomyrdin was briefly acting president during Mr. Yeltsin's heart surgery, with control over Russia's vast nuclear arsenal.

Officially, Mr. Yeltsin is still in command of the arsenal while he lies in hospital.

Dr. Gagan said that the comeback in December may have been too ambitious after such a gruelling bout of heart surgery.

The president should have remained in quarantine after his operation. He appeared in public too quickly, raising the risks of contamination. But it's in his character to get up straight after the operation," Dr. Gagan said.

"It's unprecedented for someone to get up less than a week after the operation and then begin to work."

Izvestia daily's analyst Stepan Kiselev wrote that despite the Kremlin spin doctors' attempts to show Mr. Yeltsin bouncing back to form "you can't pull the wool over people's eyes."

"The television viewer had the first suspicion that something was wrong with the president when pictures were shown of his meeting with the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (Saturday): The Russian president was clearly in a bad way."

Japan, Indonesia agree to combat terrorism

JAKARTA (R) — The leaders of Japan and Indonesia agreed Friday on exchanges of intelligence information to combat terrorism, and also pledged to enhance economic and cultural ties between their two countries.

Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's five-nation South East Asian tour has been overshadowed by the crisis in Lima, where Peruvian rebels are holding hostages in the Japanese ambassador's residence.

Indonesian State Secretary Mardiono said Mr. Hashimoto had given Indonesian President Suharto a full briefing on the Lima situation during 90 minutes of formal talks at the state palace.

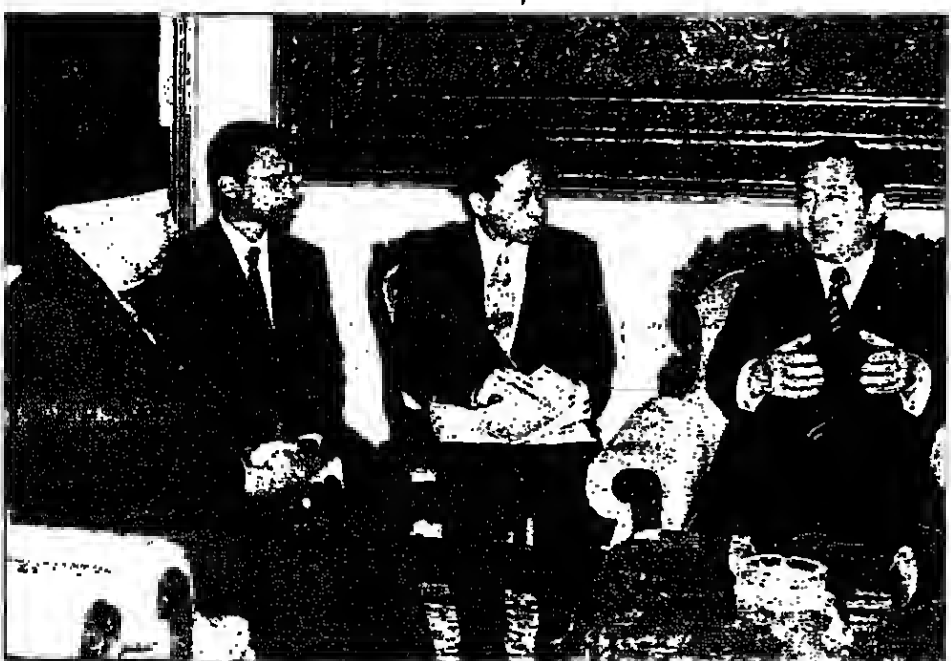
"It is expected that intelligence officials of both countries will cooperate closely and exchange information to prevent future terrorist activities," Mr. Mardiono told reporters after the meeting.

During a brief initial meeting Thursday after Mr. Hashimoto's arrival from Malaysia, he and Mr. Suharto agreed terrorism must be opposed or else the pattern of violence would continue.

A Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman told journalists Mr. Hashimoto had stressed at the Friday meeting the need for international action to counter terrorism.

The spokesman said Mr. Suharto had accepted an invitation from Hashimoto to visit Japan. No date was mentioned.

Mr. Mardiono said that



Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto (right) talks with Indonesian President Suharto (left) accompanied by their interpreters in Jakarta's State Palace Friday. Mr. Hashimoto is on a three-day visit to discuss bilateral, regional and global issues (Reuters photo)

during their Friday session, they agreed to expand economic and cultural relations, while Mr. Hashimoto also offered Japanese expertise in overcoming environmental problems.

The Japanese spokesman said Tokyo highly regarded Indonesia's economic and social development.

"Japan remains committed to stable economic and social development in Indonesia," he said when asked for a reaction to recent disturbances in Indonesia and their possible effect on investment.

Japan is Indonesia's highest trading partner and aid donor, with investment last

year of nearly \$7.0 billion.

The spokesman said Mr. Hashimoto had emphasised Japan's desire to work together with members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) — which marks its 30th anniversary this year — as the world enters the 21st century.

The prime minister's tour is taking him on a swing through ASEAN members Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Singapore. He visited the other two members, Thailand and the Philippines, last year.

"Japan wants to broaden ties with ASEAN countries," the spokesman said. Diplomats earlier said

Tokyo was seeking to move its relations with South East Asia beyond mainly economic ties. It was also looking at ways to adjust its Overseas Development Aid (ODA) to better serve the needs of individual countries in the region.

Hashimoto is due to leave Jakarta for Vietnam Saturday and then visit Singapore before heading home.

An embassy official denied Tokyo market rumours that the prime minister would cut short his tour due to the fall in the stock market there.

"There is no change in the schedule," the official told Reuters.

Sri Lanka counts the dead after huge Tiger onslaught

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lankan troops kept up a major search Friday a day after Tamil Tiger guerrillas stormed two military bases, leaving 800 combatants dead or wounded on both sides, officials here said.

Security forces recovered the bodies of over 60 soldiers killed in Thursday's pre-dawn assault on the Paranthan and Elephant Pass army camps, and sporadic clashes continued in the region, officials said.

"A major search is now underway to assess the damage and look for victims," a military official here said. "There are small groups of Tigers who are still confronting troops."

However, there were no immediate reports of casualties in the renewed fighting with guerrillas of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a military spokesman here said.

The clandestine radio of

the LTTE, the Voice of Tigers said Friday that the military suffered heavy losses in Thursday's offensive, the worst against security forces in six months.

The Tigers gave no figures for their own casualties or those of the security forces. The Tigers said they destroyed artillery gun positions of the security forces at Paranthan.

The Defence Ministry in a brief statement said that 500 Tiger guerrillas were either killed or wounded in the main fighting that lasted for nearly seven hours.

Government losses have been placed at 232 soldiers wounded and at least 60 killed. "The figure of our own troops killed in action is likely to increase as the search is still going on," the Defence Ministry said.

Most of the military casualties were due to 122-millimetre long range artillery guns fired by the Tigers, officials said.

Air force helicopter gun ships and fixed wing planes were deployed to hit rebel concentrations, officials said. The guerrillas were suspected to have targeted artillery batteries at the two bases located in hostile terrain.

However, the Defence Ministry said guerrillas withdrew without being able to take away the guns with them. The security forces themselves disabled nine artillery pieces, officials said.

Military analysts said the massive attack against government forces shows the vulnerability of troops stretched thinly in hostile territory of the island's north.

Security forces have spread themselves over a large area following the capture of the LTTE's main bastion of Jaffna and the key towns that were under rebel control.

Tiger guerrillas have been

confined to the vast jungle tracks of the island's north and parts of the eastern province but the group has retained its military machinery to stage spectacular hit-and-run attacks.

The latest Tiger offensive was the worst against security forces in the north of the country since Tiger guerrillas wiped out an entire army garrison of 1,200 troops in July at the north-eastern town of Mullaitivu.

The latest Tiger action in the north of the country came even as elite army commandos kept up a search and destroy mission against the rebels in the eastern district of Batticaloa.

The LTTE is leading a drawn out guerrilla war to establish an independent homeland for the country's two million Tamil minority concentrated in the northern and eastern regions.

More than 50,000 people have been killed in fighting in the past 24 years.

S. Korean court issues arrest warrants for strike leaders

SEOUL (R) — Brushing aside the threat of all-out strikes and appeals by an international labour group, a South Korean court Friday issued arrest warrants for seven strike leaders huddled in a Seoul cathedral.

Militant leaders of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions have warned that any attempt to seize them will trigger nationwide work stoppages, including a public sector shutdown.

It was not immediately clear whether police would attempt to storm the grounds of Myeongdong Cathedral, where the seven are sheltering in freezing conditions inside a ramshackle tent.

Earlier, confederation President Kwon Young-Kil and six deputies rebuffed police trying to deliver a summons for them to appear in court.

State prosecutors had asked for the arrest of the seven on charges of obstructing business by staging illegal strikes over the introduction of a new labour law that allows worker layoffs for the first time.

The judge first said he wanted to question them but

issued the warrants after they refused to show up.

Police investigators supported by several hundred riot police burst into confederation headquarters shortly before midnight Thursday and carted away documents.

"If any of the seven, including myself, are arrested, we have orders to start intensive strikes immediately," Mr. Kwon told a news conference before the warrants were issued.

In the southeast city of Ulsan, a worker was in critical condition after setting fire to himself during a clash between strikers from the Hyundai Group and riot police, a Hyundai union official and hospital spokesman said.

Three others were hurt during the incident. It was the first serious injury reported since strikes erupted on Dec. 26 when the labour bill was rammed through parliament.

Hyundai workers have been at the forefront of strikes that the confederation says has brought out 190,000 of its 500,000 members. The Labour Mi-

nistry says only 70,000 workers are out.

A Myeongdong Church official urged government and union leaders to compromise, saying "democracy is the result of talks and cooperation."

Leaders of the Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) were due to arrive Saturday to try to persuade the government to scrap a law they say is a step towards greater repression.

The ICFTU has urged South Korea not to arrest the seven.

Minister for Labour Jin Nyum rejected ICFTU criticisms and said no other country had been awarding annual 15 per cent pay increases while still suffering from violent industrial strife.

"There is no customer in the world who wants to buy products out of plants where petrol bombs fly because of violent labour disputes," he told a news conference.

"There is nothing in the new law that worsens the rights of workers."

Frank Sinatra suffers heart attack, returns to hospital

LOS ANGELES (R) — Frank Sinatra suffered a heart attack and was rushed to hospital Thursday — the third time in two months the entertainer known to his fans as "Ol' Blue Eyes" has been admitted to a medical centre.

He appears to have had an uncomplicated heart attack and is undergoing tests, observation and treatment, Sinatra's doctor Rex Kennamer said in a statement.

"His prognosis is good," the physician said of the legendary 81-year-old singer and Oscar-winning movie actor.

Charlie Lohae, a spokeswoman for the Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre said Sinatra was brought in by paramedics, accompanied by his wife Barbara. She said Sinatra was in a regular room at the hospital and not in the intensive care unit.

The entertainer had been released only 48 hours earlier from the same Beverly Hills facility after spending Monday night there for an undisclosed reason.

His publicist Susan Reynolds declined at the time to say why Sinatra was in the hospital and refused to say Thursday whether it may have been connected to his apparent heart attack.

He also spent eight days in Cedars-Sinai last November after being admitted for a pinched nerve and later developing pneumonia.

In an interview last month his daughter Nancy Sinatra said that when asked what he wanted for Christmas, the singer replied, "another Christmas."

In recent years, he has suffered various health problems. In November 1986, Sinatra underwent an emergency operation to remove a foot-long piece of his large intestine. In March 1994, he collapsed on stage from heat exhaustion in Richmond, midway through My Way and was in the hospital briefly.

And in November 1995, when musicians spanning a half century from Tony Bennett to Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen joined together to wish him a happy 80th birthday, Sinatra appeared disoriented and off-key when singing his signature song New York, New York.

Backstage, he wisecracked with reporters, but wife Barbara took him firmly by the hand to lead him out the room as his conversation rambled.

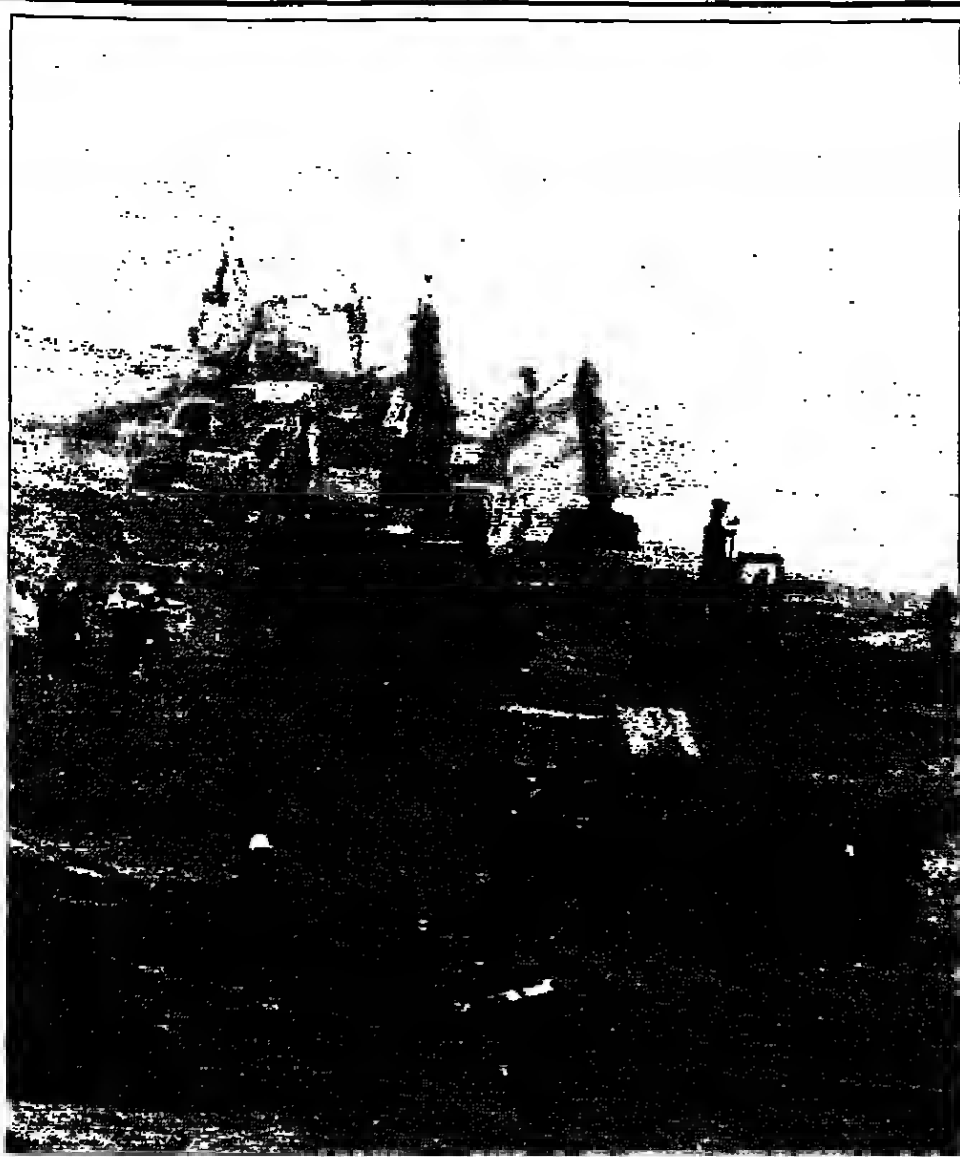
Since he took the microphone as a skinny 20-year-old at the Rustic Cabin Roadhouse in Englewood, New Jersey, in August 1937, Sinatra has rewritten the history of popular music.

He cut his first record — From The Bottom Of My Heart and Melancholy Mood — in 1939 with the Harry James Orchestra.

Since then he had such hits as Witchcraft, I Get A Kick Out Of You, The Lady Is A Tramp, Chicago, It Was A Very Good Year, Strangers In The Night and two songs he has made his own — My Way and New York, New York.

In addition to a recording career, which stretched from the big band years when he was an idol of teenage "hobby-soxers," to recent duets with the likes of Bono and Elton John, Sinatra has made some 50 movies ranging from the dramatic — The Man With The Golden Arm (1956) and The Manchurian Candidate (1962) — to musicals such as Guys And Dolls (1956), High Society (1956) and Pal Joey (1957).

He won the 1953 Oscar for best supporting actor in From Here To Eternity and was nominated for best actor playing a drug addict in The Man With The Golden Arm.



Workers use cranes to clear oil spills polluting Katano Beach in northwestern Japan Friday. The oil from an ageing Russian tanker which broke up and sank eight days ago in stormy weather in the Sea of Japan has washed up along 450 kilometres of coastline, making it one of Japan's worst oil pollution accidents (Reuter photo)

Primakov warns Chechenya may soon break away

MOSCOW (R) — Chechenya could soon break away from Russia unless the government could help prevent a split by streamlining relations with the states of the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Chechen diaspora in various regions of Russia and overseas.

There is a real threat that Chechenya could split from Russia, Russian news agencies quoted Mr. Primakov as telling a cabinet meeting.

The major task for the Russian government and other bodies is "to think about it now and not let this happen," RIA news agency quoted him as saying.

The rebel mainly-Muslim region is due to hold presidential elections on Jan. 27 following a 21-month conflict between Russia and Chechen separatist fighters which ended in August.

Russian officials have supported the elections even though the main candidates, most of whom headed the armed resistance in the bloody conflict, insist on Chechenya's independence.

Interfax quoted Mr. Primakov as saying the government could help prevent a split by streamlining relations with the states of the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Chechen diaspora in various regions of Russia and overseas.

Moscow said Sunday it had withdrawn all the troops it sent to Chechenya two years ago to stop it splitting from Russia. Tens of thousands of people, mainly civilians, died in the war.

But it is sticking by its insistence that Chechenya must remain part of Russia, both to stop other ethnic groups from pressing for autonomy and to keep a grip on the lucrative oil pipeline which runs through the rebellious north Caucasus.

Meanwhile, fifteen ministers in Chechenya's interim government reportedly offered to resign Thursday to protest the sacking of a key government figure accused of taking a partisan

position in upcoming elections.

The mass protest was sparked by Interim President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev's sacking Wednesday of the Minister for Links With Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Ruslan Kurayev, Interfax News Agency said.

Mr. Yandarbiyev, who is seeking to renew his term in the Jan. 27 presidential elections, accused Mr. Kurayev of actively helping his chief rival, Aslan Maskhadov, the Chechens' wartime chief of staff.

Under the election rules, all candidates for president have to give up their current posts in the interim government, except for Mr. Yandarbiyev.

Mr. Kurayev had close links to Mr. Maskhadov throughout the war and his National Independence Party has given its support to Mr. Maskhadov's candidacy.

The five main contenders in the presidential race were all part of the rebel leadership during the 21-month war and have denied that their post now is causing splits.

But the row over Mr. Kurayev added further weight to the impression that their wartime unity is under strain.

Mr. Maskhadov is seen as the favourite to unseat Mr. Yandarbiyev.

Echo Moscow radio quoted unidentified sources as saying Thursday that another chief candidate, wartime spokesman Movladi Udogov, would stand down and endorse Mr. Maskhadov.

As the first post-war Chechen leader Mr. Maskhadov would have the difficult job of trying to restore Chechenya's shattered infrastructure and economy and continue negotiations with Russia over the republic's independence drive.

Under a peace accord, the Russians have agreed to pull out and both sides have frozen the question of political status for up to five years.

Japan oil spill heads for nuclear power plants

TOKYO (R) — One of the worst oil spills in Japan's history spread across a widening swathe of coastline Friday and posed potential problems for a string of nuclear reactors along the waterfront.

The 15 reactors, the highest concentration of nuclear power plants in the world, rely on seawater to cool the system and avoid a meltdown.

The oil from an ageing Russian tanker which broke up and sank eight days ago in stormy weather in the Sea of Japan has washed up along 450 kilometres of coastline, making it one of Japan's worst oil pollution accidents.

The plants include Monju, the world's second-largest fast-breeder reactor. Fast-breeder reactors produce more plutonium than they consume.

Japan, which already relies on nuclear plants for nearly one-third of its power, regards them as a pillar of its energy policy into the 21st century.

Several nuclear power plant operators said the slicks were about 10 kilometres off the coastline and they were erecting oil fences in case the slicks continued towards shore.

They said operations would not be affected if the oil stayed near the surface. The intake pipes are set about five metres below sea level.

A spokesman for Kansai Electric Power Co., which operates 11 reactors around Wakasa Bay, said the reactors were operating as usual and they had no plans to lower their power production.

"We have set up oil fences and the pipe pulling in water is four to seven metres below the sea surface. If the oil enters the coolant pipes, it could lower the cooling effect, but it is unlikely that a large amount of oil would enter the system," a spokesman told Reuters.

Authorities still do not know the extent of the leakage from the 13,157-tonne tanker Nakhodka, built 26 years ago, which was carrying 19,000 tonnes (133,000 barrels) of fuel oil.

They initially estimated 3,700 tonnes (26,000 barrels) of oil spilled but now believe this figure is far too low.

The 31-man crew on the tanker, which broke in two, were rescued but the captain is missing and presumed dead.

Japan's Fisheries Agency says shellfish and seaweed growing operations have been badly damaged and fear the oil could harm offshore net and bottom fishing for shrimp and crabs.

The bow of the tanker was washed up on rocks in Mikuni, a fishing town of 20,000 people which has been devastated by the spill.

The stern, where two-thirds of the oil was stored, sank about 115 kilometres offshore and much of the oil now leaking from there has not yet been reached shore.

The shoreline threatened by the spill spans six prefectures on the Sea of Japan, stretching from around Kyoto to the Noto peninsula, the Fisheries Agency said in a statement.

The area includes some of Japan's most fertile fishing areas as well as small ports and tourist resorts.

Meanwhile, the top civil servant in charge of cleanup operations for the oil spill lost both his feet and an arm Friday when he fell in front of a speeding subway train, a police spokesman said.

The spokesman told Reuters that police were mystified about how Kazuo Watanabe, 50, director of Japan's Marine Pollution and Waste Management Office, fell on to the tracks at Central Tokyo's Awajicho Station.

"We know he wasn't pushed or knocked and we are interviewing people about what happened," the spokesman said.

The incident during the morning commuter period stopped trains on the busy Marunouchi Line for nearly one hour, making many people late for work.

Mr. Watanabe was unconscious in hospital in serious condition, the spokesman added.

An environment agency official told Reuters that Mr. Watanabe had been working almost non-stop since Jan. 2, when the Russian tanker broke in two in stormy weather in the Sea of Japan.

Clinton, Gore won

WASHINGTON (R) — Two months and four days after November's U.S. election, the outcome is now official: President Bill Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore won.

Their victory margin: 379 electoral votes to 159 for Republicans Bob Dole and Jack Kemp and none for anyone else.

This was duly certified and announced for the record, and for really finicky historians, Thursday at a 25-minute joint session of Congress. There, as required by the U.S. Constitution, the votes cast by members of the Electoral College in December were read and counted.

Under the indirect U.S. election system that confuses people every four years, the electors from each of the 50 states were chosen on Nov. 5 when Americans voted for states pledged to either Democrats Clinton and Gore, Republicans

be deemed a sufficient declaration of the persons elected president and vice president of the United States, each for the term beginning on the 20th day of the January, 1997, and shall be entered together with a list of the votes on the journals of the Senate and House of Representatives," Mr. Gore intoned, reading the traditional script.

Although famous for a wooden speaking style, not even he actually talks like that.

Mr. Clinton will be sworn-in for a second term as president on inauguration day, January 20.

The Electoral College was established by the constitution in 1789. Proposals are made after each presidential election to abolish it and use the popular vote, but that would require a constitutional amendment and one has ever been approved.

They were the same as widely calculated and reported on election night, 379-159.

Reform Party leader Ross Perot and other presidential candidates did not win any electoral votes.

"This announcement shall stay with them and I will march forward," Mr. Ershad said.

Mr. Ershad, who faced 19 charges of corruption, had been in jail since he was toppled in a people's uprising in December 1990.

His lawyers said Mr. Ershad was granted bail Wednesday by the Supreme Court on the last of a series of corruption charges against him. It involved the purchase of defence radar equipment.

The opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, headed by former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, described Gen. Ershad's freedom as the "outcome of a successful conspiracy" between the Janata Party and the ruling Awami League.

BNP Secretary-General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said, "Now that Ershad has been freed, there is no need to keep any other criminals in jail. His freedom proved an unholy alliance between Ershad and Sheikh Hasina."

Janata's deputy leader, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, said he was glad the government of Sheikh

Hasina "did not interfere with law and did not try to keep Ershad in prison."

Mr. Ershad's party supported Hasina's Awami League in forming a government following the June elections.

"I was a victim of political vengeance. One party tried to destroy me," Mr. Ershad said, referring to the BNP.

Mr. Ershad, who seized power in a 1982 bloodless coup, was sentenced to 23 years' imprisonment in four cases involving possession of illegal firearms and corruption.

The High Court last year quashed a 10-year sentence for the arms offences and Ershad has appealed against the other convictions.

Mr. Ershad had been in a special jail set up near parliament since winning a seat in the June elections.

He won bail last November, but was only allowed access to parliament, in what was the most sensational case against him — the charge of killing Major-General Abdul Manzur during a 1981 army mutiny.

Freed former Bangladeshi leader vows to pursue political career

DHAKA (R) — Former Bangladesh President Hosain Mohammad Ershad, freed from jail Thursday, said he would soon resume an active political life.

He denied opposition charges that his freedom was the result of a deal between his Janata Party and the ruling Awami League of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"I did not buy my freedom through anyone's mercy or by alliance with anyone," Mr. Ershad told reporters at his home.

"I am proud that I have come out (of jail) by using law. And I am thankful to this government for allowing law to take its right course," he said, tears of joy trickling down his clean-shaven face.

Thousands of cheering supporters earlier greeted Mr. Ershad with flowers as he walked from jail to freedom Thursday.

"Justice has prevailed," shouted one as Mr. Ershad walked through the prison gates, smiling and waving.

"I am thankful to the people and grateful Allah. I will stay with them and I will march forward," Mr. Ershad said.

Mr. Ershad, who faced 19 charges of corruption, had been in jail since he was toppled in a people's uprising in December 1990.

His lawyers said Mr. Ershad was granted bail Wednesday by the Supreme Court on the last of a series of corruption charges against him. It involved the purchase of defence radar equipment.

The opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, headed by former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, described Gen. Ershad's freedom as the "outcome of a successful conspiracy" between the Janata Party and the ruling Awami League.

BNP Secretary-General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said, "Now that Ershad has been freed, there is no need to keep any other criminals in jail. His freedom proved an unholy alliance between Ershad and Sheikh Hasina."

Janata's deputy leader, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, said he was glad the government of Sheikh

Hasina "did not interfere with law and did not try to keep Ershad in prison."

Mr. Ershad's party supported Hasina's Awami League in forming a government following the June elections.

"I was a victim of political vengeance. One party tried to destroy me," Mr. Ershad said, referring to the BNP.

Mr. Ershad, who seized power in a 1982 bloodless coup, was sentenced to 23 years' imprisonment in four cases involving possession of illegal firearms and corruption.

The High Court last year quashed a 10-year sentence for the arms offences and Ershad has appealed against the other convictions.

Mr. Ershad had been in a special jail set up near parliament since winning a seat in the June elections.

He won bail last November, but was only allowed access to parliament, in what was the most sensational case against him — the charge of killing Major-General Abdul Manzur during a 1981 army mutiny.

Former spy's memoir lifts curtain on CIA

WASHINGTON (R) — An explosive new book by a former top Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) official provides an unflattering peek at the spy agency and suggests Israel was a treacherous ally during the Panama canal negotiations.

Entitled A Spy For All Seasons — My Life In The CIA, the 430-page memoir was written by Duane Clarridge, who rose to the top echelon of the CIA in the course of a 33-year career in the agency's supersecret clandestine service.

One of its most jarring disclosures concerns a Panamanian military unit that Mr. Clarridge considered using as part of U.S. counter-terrorism operations in the 1980s, and the role of Israel — then and now the largest recipient of U.S. Foreign aid by far — in training it.

"The unit I was interested in had actually been developed by the Israelis during the Carter administration at the time of the Panama Canal crisis. In the event that the negotiations with the United States failed, the

unit would sabotage the canal," he writes.

Mr. Clarridge's reference is to U.S. negotiations with Panama in the late 1970s over the future of the canal that resulted in treaties requiring the United States to cede control of the strategic waterway to the Panamanians by the end of 1999.

But Israel's alleged assistance might have been payback for alleged U.S. dealings during a 1976 crisis in Lebanon with the Palestinian group who planned and led the 1972 Munich massacre of Olympic athletes.

The situation in Beirut had deteriorated, and to evacuate everyone (at the U.S. embassy) safely out of the city was going to take some real doing. Through an intermediary, we established a relationship with Ali Hassan Salameh (Aka Abu Hassan) of Al Fatah," Mr. Clarridge writes, adding the Black September leader would up covering the U.S. pullout to signal his faction's desire for better relations with Washington.

But the shifting alliances described in the book are only part of its eyebrow-raising, sometimes unintentionally comical content.

Among other things, Clarridge also discloses: — That in order to provide food, arms and ammunition to U.S.-backed contra rebels fighting Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government in the mid-1980s, the CIA "acquired a number of Honduran mules, hoping the guerrillas would use them to establish caches of supplies inside Nicaragua."

"Once inside the country, the guerrillas ate the mules," Mr. Clarridge writes.

— That the CIA positioned a yacht off Grenada a few days before U.S. forces stormed that island in 1983 to serve as a communications link with CIA agents in Grenada. "However, the U.S. Navy shoed all of the private yachts out of the area, and we were unable to coordinate quickly enough with the navy to allow our yacht to remain in place," he writes.

Mr. Clarridge became entangled in the Iran-contra scandal — a Reagan administration

embarrassment that involved trading arms for U.S. hostages held by pro-Iranian militants in Lebanon — and resigned under pressure from the CIA in 1988.

A federal grand jury later indicted him on perjury charges lodged by the Iran-contra special prosecutor, but George Bush, in one of his last acts as president, pardoned Mr. Clarridge and several others caught up in the case before they stood trial.

Clearly embittered by that experience, Mr. Clarridge is disdainful of the conduct of some of his CIA colleagues during the Iran-contra probe, including former CIA Director William Webster, whom he describes as "a lightweight — with no semblance of moral or political fiber."

Mr. Clarridge is also contemptuous of John Deutch, who has led the CIA since 1994, claiming that Mr. Deutch has bowed to pressure to strip the CIA of its cloak-and-dagger capabilities.

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Tajik warlord remains in Tursunzade, official says

DUSHANBE (R) — The rebel commander of the Tajik government's elite armoured brigade has not quit the aluminium producing town of Tursunzade as promised, a senior government official said Friday.

"He has not left Tursunzade," Zafar Saidov, spokesman for Tajik President Imomali Rakhmonov said of the commander, Colonel Mahmud Khudoyberdiyev.

"He has moved only some of his armour back to (the nearby town of) Shakhriyul," Mr. Saidov told Reuters in the Tajik capital Dushanbe.

Col. Khudoyberdiyev, who led an armed revolt against the government in February last year, moved troops and tanks into Tursunzade, 45 kilometres west of Dushanbe, Wednesday to disarm local strongman Kodir Abdulayev.

He said he would leave the town Thursday.

The colonel's move has alarmed Mr. Rakhmonov's shaky administration, which said Col. Khudoyberdiyev acted without orders.

"His actions were illegal," said Mr. Saidov. "We hope he obeys orders and returns to barracks."

Mr. Saidov said negotiations between the commander and the government were continuing Friday.

The government of the remote former Soviet republic, which borders Afghanistan and China, is currently trying to negotiate an end to a bitter four-year civil war with Islamist opposition guerrillas.

A ceasefire appears to be holding but Col. Khudoyberdiyev's actions and a spate of shootings and bombings in the capital last week have sparked fears for the country's fragile peace.

29 people killed in U.S. plane crash

MONROE, Michigan (R) — A Delta Comair commuter plane slammed into a snow-covered field southwest of Detroit during a snowstorm Thursday, killing all 29 people on board, officials said.

The plane, an Embraer Brasilia 120 en route to Detroit from Cincinnati, crashed in Raisinville township about 10 kilometres west of Monroe in southeastern Michigan, at 3:56 est. (2056 GMT) officials said. The crash site was

about 40 kilometres from Detroit.

Cincinnati-based Comair, an independent carrier that flies commuter routes for Delta, said the 30-seat plane was carrying 26 passengers and three crew members.

Flight 3272 had been cleared for approach to Runway 3 at Detroit Metropolitan Airport when air traffic controllers lost radar contact at 3:56. Comair Senior Vice President of Marketing

Charles Curran told a news briefing. No distress signals were sent, he said.

"We found nothing that would indicate this was anything but a normal flight," Mr. Curran said.

Comair said the plane has been with the company since February 1992 and had its most recent maintenance checkup on Nov. 20, 1996. Mr. Curran denied an earlier report the plane had been grounded earlier for rudder problems.

Yeltsin's worsen

win these elections." If Yeltsin were to die or step down, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin would take over as acting president while new elections were organised within three months.

Mr. Chernomyrdin was briefly acting president during Mr. Yeltsin's heart surgery, with control over Russia's vast nuclear arsenal.

Officially, Mr. Yeltsin is still in command of the arsenal while he lies in hospital.

Dr. Gagman said that the comeback in December may have been too ambitious after such a grueling bout of heart surgery.

"The president should have remained in quarantine after his operation. He appeared in public too quickly, raising the risks of contamination. But it's in his character to get up straight after the operation," Dr. Gagman said.

"It's unprecedented for someone to get up less than a week after the operation and then begin to work."

Evening daily's analyst Stepan Kiselev wrote that despite the Kremlin spin doctors' attempts to show Mr. Yeltsin bouncing back to form "you can't pull the wool over people's eyes."

He had the first suspicion that something was wrong with the president when parties were shown on the meeting with the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (Saturday). The Russian president was clearly in a bad way.

sues arrest ke leaders

workers are on strike. A Moscow court has ordered the arrest of several leaders of the strike, saying they are obstructing the work of the court.

Leaders of the Russian-based International Federation of Free Trade Unions (IFFTU) were ordered to appear in court to answer charges of obstructing the work of the court.

The IFFTU was ordered to appear in court to answer charges of obstructing the work of the court.

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Jordan Times

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Message of Ramadan

RAMADAN, THE holiest of all months of the Hijri year, has just started with renewed faith that observance of its full and comprehensive meaning would uplift man's concerns and focus of attention from materialism to the wider horizons of spirituality. "Fasting" during the month of Ramadan should help in the quest for alleviating human suffering by mankind be it economic, social or political. The spirituality of Ramadan, of course, can best be realised through prayer, reflection and meditation coupled with abstinence not only from dawn to sunset but through the remembrance and practice of the inner teachings of the holy month throughout its days and beyond.

We have seen time and again, though, how many fellow Muslims transform nights into days and days into nights merely paying lip service to the prescriptions of "fasting," unmindful of the wider and deeper messages of spiritual and material self discipline associated with the month. Instead of breaking their fasts first and foremost with prayer and meditation, on the simplest of nourishments, many indulge themselves in rich foods and drinks as if ending their fast is a feast of all feasts. That is not what Ramadan is all about.

We would rather see the month of fasting as an occasion to take stock of what we are doing with our lives as individuals as well as a people and where we are heading or could be heading. There are many problems and challenges facing our country which could be alleviated by heeding the true messages of Islam in general and Ramadan in particular. At every juncture of our lives there is room for religion to play a pivotal role in steering our sense of direction. If we take poverty amongst us as an example, this is just the time to remind ourselves of our commitments to fellow human beings by extending to the less privileged not only alms but opportunities for self reliance as well.

Even as we pursue our democratic path, or our economic development or good relations with neighbours, our faith contains the necessary guidelines for the attainment of these objectives. Above all, the way we treat each other, whether on the immediate family level or the extended national level, should be motivated and influenced by the message of Ramadan. There is no doubt that if Ramadan is observed spiritually as well as materially, there would be enough self-cleansing amongst many of us to make a real difference in our lives.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE ISRAELI media propagates lies to the world by accusing the Palestinian leadership of dragging its feet in its negotiations with Israel in the redeployment of Israeli forces in the Hebron region and also by accusing Egypt of encouraging the Palestinians to be adamant in their position and reject the Israeli terms, according to Sulian Hattab, a writer for Al Ra'i. By adopting this stand, the Israeli media is hoping to bring about American pressure on Egypt to change its pro-Palestinian stance and pressure Yasser Arafat into accepting the Israeli terms for a settlement, he said. In view of this situation, the writer said that the ball is now in the Arab court and the Arab countries should embark on particular steps to ensure the continuation of the peace process and guarantee the return of Arab rights, said the writer. He suggested that the Arab countries back Jordan and Egypt in their support for the Palestinian stand and exert pressure on the world community to force Israel to comply with the requirements of peace, and that the Arabs carry out a worldwide campaign that would expose Israel's aggressive policies. The writer said that the Arabs should provide support for the Israeli peace groups which continue to oppose Mr. Netanyahu's policies and should allow the Arab masses to express their real feelings towards Israel and its practices.

A WRITER for Al Dustour wondered why the United States signed the Oslo, Cairo and Taba accords between the Palestinians and the Israelis while in practice it is working against their implementation. What its envoy, Dennis Ross, is doing now is not exercising pressure on the Netanyahu government to implement these accords but rather to justify the Israeli government's disregard of these agreements, charged Taher Adwan, a writer for Al Dustour. The writer said that Washington's signature on the accords would guarantee the success of the Middle East peace process, but they were disillusioned when faced with the facts on the ground. Should the peace process end in failure, the American role and Washington's credibility would suffer, he said, adding that if the United States is not willing to honour its own signature to the accords, it is hoped that the Arab countries would take matters into their own hands and find the right formula to help them regain their rights.

Jordanian Perspective

Protest against Israeli trade fair — message that peace should be just and comprehensive

THE PEACEFUL demonstration staged in Amman last week by opposition parties, against the convening of an Israeli trade fair in Jordan, was no doubt an emphatic democratic expression. Given the fierce statements that came from the so-called "national committee for cancelling the Israeli trade fair," it was expected that the protest in front of the exhibition site would have turned nasty. But restraint on the part of the protesters as well as the security forces prevailed, and the protesters dispersed without any serious incident after six hours. No one was arrested or beaten up and no tear gas was used; the only sore point, perhaps, was the use of water cannon by police to push back protesters who threatened to break the police lines at the outset of the demonstration.

The episode underlines the growing democratic maturity among Jordanians who have come to accept that just as it is their right to demonstrate and express their opinion in public it is also the right of the security forces of this country not to allow any infringement on law and order.

We have to remember here that the protest action did not have the legally required permission from the authorities and, by virtue of the relevant legislation, everyone who participated in the action was violating the law, regardless of the intensity of sentiments.

Wednesday's peaceful demonstration reminds us of a similar event, on May 14, 1990, when at least 20,000 Jordanians gathered in the Jordan Valley to stage a "peace march" to the King Hussein Bridge. The demonstration

got out of hand simply because the Israeli arrogance, turning down Arab and international overtures for peace, was simply no longer bearable. A large number of protesters were youths, many of them of Palestinian extraction, and for them the sight of Palestine across the river from vantage points on the East Bank was their first view of the land and too tempting to be controlled by rational arguments. In the end, tear gas had to be used and live shots were fired to the air to disperse the demonstrators who tried to break through the police barricade.

No doubt the popular anger against Israel's hardline approach was fuelled and intensified on the eve of last week's protest by the revelation that the Likud-led government of Benjamin Netanyahu was seeking a nearly two-year delay in the schedule of Israeli withdrawals from the Palestinian territories as stipulated in the Oslo agreements. Therefore, many officials were expecting serious trouble. The fact that no trouble occurred evidences the acceptance by Jordanians of the democracy that dominates their lives today.

Having said that, however, the government will be better advised to take note of the political undercurrent that emerged from the demonstration. Quite simply, it showed an alliance between the extreme right and the radical left. Such a combination is very dangerous for any country. The extreme right that controls the streets could be easily manipulated by the strategists on the radical left, and no one could predict what might happen next. The scenario

would be that of a powerful blind man led by a bitter cripple who believes in having an eternal axe to grind against the establishment. The threat is very much there, and the government should be moving in the direction of neutralising it through winning over the extreme right.

It is not very hard to assess how mainstream Israelis, including the powerful business community, viewed the Amman demonstration. For them, it was a clear message of the danger inherent in the crooked policies of their right-wing government and an emphatic statement that the Arabs would not allow themselves to be taken for granted.

The people of Israel and of course the political leaders of Israel need no refreshing courses in the requirements of just, comprehensive and durable peace with the Arabs. Anyone who argues that Israel's "security" would not be guaranteed even if it accepts all the legitimate rights of the Arabs is simply feigning sleep.

It is high time that the Israeli establishment woke up and accepted the reality that its continued refusal to recognise and honour the territorial and political rights of the Arabs, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese included, is keeping the goal of comprehensive peace in the region elusive. Israel cannot hope to be a part of the Middle Eastern order as long as it continues to occupy Arab territories and refuses to acknowledge that its "security" would not and could not come through the barrel of its big guns.

A fateful moment in Arab-Israeli diplomacy

By Thomas L. Friedman

NEW YORK — This is a moment of real import in Arab-Israeli diplomacy. The talks between Israelis and Palestinians are poised for either a decision that will have a huge impact on their relations or for disintegration that will have a huge impact on the region.

President Bill Clinton, pay attention. The Israeli-Palestinian deal over Hebron was supposed to be just one incremental step on the road to final negotiations. But instead it is turning into a mini-version of the final negotiations, with the stability of the whole region and the Israeli political alignment in the balance.

Put simply, Benjamin Netanyahu is afraid of where the Hebron deal is going to take him, which is closer to a Palestinian state, and Yasser Arafat is afraid Hebron won't take him where he wants to go, which is closer to a Palestinian state. So each man is trying to cram into Hebron assurances about what will and

will not come after Hebron by way of further Israeli redeployments on the West Bank, and that is where the deal has become stuck.

Both men have good reason to be worried. Mr. Netanyahu is worried because he now has a much better grasp of how deeply rooted the Oslo process is.

"Benjamin Netanyahu is afraid of where the Hebron deal is going to take him, which is closer to a Palestinian state, and Yasser Arafat is afraid Hebron won't take him where he wants to go, which is closer to a Palestinian state."

When the right wing was out of power in Israel, it got to pretend that Oslo did not exist. But since his election Mr. Netanyahu, and at least some of his ministers, have come to understand the degree to which Oslo has become central to Israel's integration in the region and the world, the degree to which the Israeli silent majority is ready to go

along with it, provided Oslo's security provisions are implemented, and the degree to which Oslo has become part of the Middle East landscape and can be aborted only at a price most Israelis do not want to pay.

So Mr. Netanyahu's willingness to withdraw from Hebron, in accordance with

Oslo, is not some favour to America. It is the rational (but grudging) act of a politician who understands where the majority of his people want to go.

Mr. Netanyahu knows that about half of Israelis, those on the left who voted Labour, already embrace Oslo and accept any Hebron deal. Another 25 per cent — the security hawks to the

right of centre — voted for him because they wanted a better Oslo, with stronger security, and he has satisfied them. He knows that the remainder, those on the far religious and nationalist right, voted for him to oppose Oslo, and those he has disappointed.

Recently the Israeli pollster Hanoth Smith asked Israelis: "Are you in favour of continuing the peace process?" Seventy-five per cent said "yes. There lies Mr. Netanyahu's problem.

While a majority are behind him in doing this Hebron deal, many of them come from the opposition Labour Party, and thus their views and their weight are not reflected in his cabinet.

His cabinet reflects only the views of those on the right who voted for him; and they are divided. Some support what he is doing in Hebron; others think he is selling them and their ideology out.

Mr. Netanyahu is trying to overcome the problem by saying: I'll withdraw from Hebron to satisfy the majority that wants the peace

process to continue, but I won't commit to all the further redeployments in the West Bank after Hebron that might lead to a Palestinian state, to satisfy my ideology. He wants to be half-pregnant.

If Mr. Arafat were smart, he would let Netanyahu be half-pregnant and sign the Hebron deal now. Here is why.

Soon after any Hebron deal, the Jewish right will split. Some will go to the barricades, but others will slowly draw the conclusion that important Jewish conservatives, such as Henry Kissinger, have already drawn: a Palestinian state of some kind in the West Bank and Gaza is inevitable, and a smart conservative leadership in Israel would recognise that reality and develop a conservative approach to such a state that would shape it in ways most conducive to Israel's security.

The latest polls show that 45 per cent of Israelis already accept a Palestinian state, and that is without Labour or Likud ever having endorsed the idea.

Mr. Arafat's mistake is thinking that Mr. Netanyahu is acting under external pressure, and thus is vulnerable to more Palestinian demands. Wrong. Mr. Netanyahu has come as far as he has because he is acting under internal pressure from an Israeli silent majority that wants to see Oslo continued — because it wants separation with security from the Palestinians, and integration with prosperity with the world.

The swift cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian security services to prevent a blowup in Hebron after the shooting rampage by an Israeli fanatic is just what Israel's silent majority wants. If Mr. Arafat can guarantee real security like that, day by day, he will coastantly have Mr. Netanyahu under pressure to take Oslo to its logical conclusion.

If he cannot, no amount of promises written into the Hebron deal will get the Palestinians where they want to go.

International Herald Tribune

THE WEEK IN PRINT

'There can be no peace with Israel until it withdraws from all the occupied Arab territories'

REVIEWED BY
ELIA NASRALLAH

IN THE past week the Jordanian dailies focused attention on the Israeli trade exhibition, the current situation in the Middle East, the bus explosion in Damascus and domestic affairs. The popular demonstration against the Israeli trade exhibition which opened Wednesday was successful by all standards and the organisers have achieved their purpose, according to Taher Adwan, a writer for Al Dustour.

The fact that representatives of the trade unions and political parties of all shades took part in the protest reflects the overwhelming popular rejection of the idea of normalising trade or other relations with the Jewish state which continues to commit atrocities against the Arab Nation, said the writer.

There was no need for more than a few hundreds to stage the demonstration against the Israeli exhibition because these hundreds represented the millions of people in Jordan who reject normalisation with Israel which is ruled by extremist groups bent on reviving the cycle of violence in the region, he added.

The writer said there can be no peace with Israel until it withdraws from all the occupied Arab territories and recognises the rights of the Arab people in their homeland.

The national campaign against the Israeli exhibition was of great significance and a clear indication that Jordanians are not ready for normalisation with the Jewish state, according to Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer for Al Ra'i daily.

He said the fact that the trade unions, the political parties and representatives of other public sectors took part in the campaign and the sit-in was enough to make the government understand that such an event is hurting the feelings of the people and should have been cancelled.

The writer said that the exhibition clearly had political objectives, of which the Jordanians were aware, and they turned in force to abort it. The writer said that Israel, which is pursuing an aggressive policy despite the peace accords it had signed with the Arabs, should be made to feel isolated and feel the pressure which aims to force it to change its present policies.

A writer for Al Ra'i

focused attention on the explosive situation resulting from Israel's threats against Lebanon and Syria and said that despite the repeated Syrian and Lebanese government statements that the two countries are willing to reach a comprehensive peace, Israel continues to escalate its military attacks on southern Lebanon.

The writer, whose pen name is Meem, said that Israel's preparations for war against Lebanon and Syria is reflected in the statements of the Israeli army commanders and defence minister as well as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and in the movement of troops along the northern borders of Israel.

He said it is clear that Mr. Netanyahu, who is facing internal pressure and a political crisis on the domestic front as a result of his government's policies, is trying to find a way out of the present dilemma by waging war on the Arab countries.

Munes Razzaz, a writer for Al Ra'i, warned that the Middle East was rapidly drawing closer to an open conflict as a result of the Israeli policies and continued aggression and its occupation of Arab territories. Citing the deadlock in

the peace process and Israel's adamant stand vis-a-vis the implementation of its accords with the Arabs, particularly the Palestinians, the writer said that the situation cannot take further procrastination on the part of Israel as the Arabs are being driven to a state of desperation that could trigger war.

The writer said that the Middle East is a very sensitive region, adding that the escalation of tension leading to an armed conflict which Israel could start against Lebanon and Syria would have severe consequences on world peace in general and Europe in particular. He said urgent action should be taken to force Israel to end its aggression and recognise Arab rights.

A writer for Al Ra'i turned attention to the bus explosion in Damascus earlier this month and said that the terrorist action must have been perpetrated by Israel, the real enemy of the Arab Nation, since it is Israel which stands to gain from such actions and from a turbulent situation in Syria.

Mohammad Kharrub said that although Syria is not on good terms with its neighbours Turkey and Iraq or with political groups in Lebanon, the

attack clearly points an accusing finger towards Israel, the notorious state with a long history of terrorist attacks on the Arab countries.

He said Israel hopes that internal disturbances in Syria would weaken the country's leadership which, in turn, would slacken Damascus's support for the Lebanese resistance which is trying to evict the Israeli occupation forces from southern Lebanon.

Mohammad Kawash, a writer for Al Dustour, bailed the creation of the Arab business council, which is to be housed in Amman, as a major achievement of the Arab business communities.

The writer said that the business council is bound to pool the efforts of the private sector in the Arab countries, encourage joint Arab investment projects and eventually lead the Arab World towards full economic integration.

However, the business council is bound to face obstacles from the Arab regimes on security grounds or due to routine procedures, warned the writer.

He said the Arab business community should first and foremost create a pressure group, urging the Arab governments to

offer facilities to investment and development projects carried out by the private sector. He said the business council can help the Arab masses achieve their aspiration of economic unity once it has overcome the obstacles laid in their path by the ruling regimes of the Arab World.

A writer for Al Dustour tackled the transport sector, noting that in Amman it is facing a real crisis due to the insufficient number of buses and service taxis.

Mohammad Daoud said that the long queues of people on the sidewalks, on many of the capital's roads, stand out as witness to the crisis which is responsible for the delay of school children and employees who fail to arrive to their destination on time.

The crisis sometimes forces the existing buses to take on additional numbers of passengers, thus endangering people's lives. He said the concerned authorities should look into the situation and ensure sufficient number of public transport buses on the roads to end the crisis and avoid further complications.

Kuwait considers levying taxes on corporations

**HOROSCOPE
FORECAST FOR
SATURDAY,
JANUARY 11, 1997**
*By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll
Richter Foundation*

sibilities at home today so there won't be any difficulties present. Invite persons later this evening who have good ideas which are helpful to you in your career activities and make you prosperous.

VIRGO: (August 22 to

September 22) Join your allies today at some luncheon and plan the days ahead more wisely with them, thereby you can make your career activities more successful. Visit persons you like later this

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You know how today to add considerably to your present assets, so get busy putting

your ideas to work and thereby making your career activities more prosperous. Later this

Energy			* JOD Cross Rates		
Commodity	Last	Delivery	Currency	Bdy	Sell
Coffee (\$/lbs)	122.57	Spot	US Dollar	0.708	0.710
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1364	Spot	CB Sterling	1.1973	1.2033
Sugar (\$/ton)	398.3	Spot	DE Mark	0.4448	0.4511
Wheat (\$/ton)	112	Spot	CH Franc	0.8178	0.8201
Soybeans (\$/ton)	22.67	Spot	FR Franc	0.1528	0.1538
Tee (\$/ton)	218	Spot	JP Yen	0.0059	0.0121
Bacon (\$/cwt)	1.10	Spot	NL Guilder	0.3569	0.3588
Rice (\$/ton)	470	Spot	IT Lira	0.0008	0.001

* Source: Reuters

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"THE NUMBER YOU HAVE DIALED IS INCORRECT. PLEASE HANG UP AND DIAL AGAIN. THIS IS A RECORDING."

7-9-3-1-2

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"I'LL DO IT REAL SLOW THIS TIME! 7-9-3-1-2"

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March 20) You have an opportunity today to add considerably to your present outlets and thereby you can become more successful. Later tonight will be a good time for you to spend quality time with your loved ones and just relax.

AFM brokers say market improving despite steady trading, prices of shares

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Trading and prices remained largely steady at the stock market in the first week of the new year as speculators adopted a wait-and-see approach amid indications of a continued upward trend in the bourse, brokers said Friday.

However, they said investors were a little disturbed by the delay in renewing a Jordanian-Iraqi oil agreement as well as a trade protocol between the two countries.

The weekly report of the Amman Financial Market (AFM) said turnover for the week ending Thursday was 8.7 million dinars, compared with the previous week's 18.9 million dinars.

"The turnover this week actually indicates an improvement because the previous week's volume included a bulk sale of shares worth nearly 13 million dinars," noted a broker, who, like other AFM dealers, cannot be identified by name under standing market guidelines.

The bulk sale involved a government sale of its equity in Amman's landmark Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel.

The AFM report said 4.7 million shares changed hands under 3,584 deals concluded during the week, and the daily average trading was 1.7 million dinars.

The official AFM share price index based on 60 major companies closed at 153.05 points, down 0.41 points or 0.27 per cent from the week's opening of 153.46 points.

Sectoral indices showed commercial banks and financial institutions gaining 1.38 per cent during the week and insurance stocks remaining unchanged. Losing were service sector shares by 1.21 per cent and industrials by 2.36 per cent, the report said.

Commercial banks and financial institutions accounted for 4.59 million dinars of the weekly volume, followed by industrials with 2.52 million dinars, service sector shares with 1.61 million dinars and insurance stocks with 9.70 million dinars.

Stocks of 85 companies were involved in this week's business, with 39 of them closing with gains, 37 slipping and nine remaining unchanged.

According to brokers, the market is improving when compared with 1996 and expected legislation would give the bourse a further boost.

The government is expected to forward a draft law on securities and financial papers to Parliament before the end of this month, officials said.

The law will ease most regulations related to foreign investment in the stock market and further ease the flow of capital in and out of the country, the brokers noted.

The brokers said investor anxiety was sparked when the annual renewal of a Jordanian-Iraqi oil agreement and the trade protocol between the two countries were expected to have been signed late December or early January.

However, official statements have said that negotiations were on track and only technical hitches were behind the delay.

"The market is somewhat assured that the agreements could be signed next week," said a banking executive who maintains a portfolio at the bourse.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic

Former governor of Central Bank warns of foreign debt rising again

Dr. Nabulsi stressed the need to continue the unwritten policy of fixing the exchange rates for the coming years. He deemed it necessary to provide some flexibility by widening the margin for Central Bank intervention such as from eight fills to 20 fills after a period of time.

The next stage after the aforementioned step should be a return to implement the available flexibility into linking the dinar to a new basket of currencies, Dr. Nabulsi indicated. He stressed that under all circumstances the Central Bank should amend the paragraph 25/A of its law because this paragraph specifies the method of pricing the Jordanian dinar by the Council of Ministers either to gold or special drawing rights. "This matter is no longer applicable," the former CBI chief affirmed (Al Ra'i).

Dr. Nabulsi said the debt service from JD317.9 million in 1990 to JD4,465.9 million in 1995 and the debt service from JD317.9 million in 1992 to JD224 million in 1996, former Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Mohammad Saeed Nabulsi continues to see the foreign debt still very high by all standards.

Noting that Jordan has received more than JD1,500 million in new loans under the economic adjustment programme, Dr. Nabulsi said the indebtedness requires intensive efforts to face its huge burden on the treasury. He pointed out that the amount due for repayment from 1996 until the end of the century was about \$1 billion, annually regardless of rescheduling arrangements.

In a lecture he recently delivered about "the financial and monetary reform in Jordan between

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ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (06/01/1997 - 08/01/1997)														
WEEKLY REPORT														
RANKING THE LAST 3 WEEKS														
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	MARKET TURNOVER
5.000	249.000	ARAB BANK	16.1	1.35	61	4760	1215204	253.00	251.00	249.00	250.50	+ 5.90	255.135	1.08
5.500	4.460	CATRO AMMAN BANK	10.5	2.84	2	500	3070	5.15	5.20	5.10	5.10	- .05	5.117	.004
3.600	3.050	BANK OF JORDAN	12.3	0.00	6	1018	3489	3.60	3.45	3.42	3.42	- .18	3.427	.010
1.090	1.010	MID-EAST INV. BK.	74.8	0.00	223	288088	322666	1.07	1.15	1.07	1.14	+ .07	1.121	2.881
2.250	2.150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.2	6.11	20	553325	1212033	2.18	2.28	2.19	2.28	+ .10	2.190	5.078
4.050	4.600	THE HOUSING BK.	12.7	2.91	25	228505	1310988	4.82	4.79	4.55	4.75	- .08	4.734	.955
2.950	2.500	JOR. INVEST. BANK	15.2	0.00	27	21371	58164	2.53	2.50	2.55	2.66	- .19	2.729	.113
.990	.960	JOR. GULF BANK	5.8	7.14	22	32750	21581	.97	.90	.97	.98	+ .01	.977	.154
2.720	3.600	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.8	0.00	36	7343	27196	3.64	2.77	3.64	3.71	+ .07	2.704	.050
1.480	1.280	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	104.0	0.00	4	2250	3240	1.38	1.45	1.44	1.45	+ .01	1.449	.025
3.750	3.500	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK	20.0	0.00	1	150000	555000	2.75	3.70	3.70	2.70	- .05	2.700	1.500
1.840	1.760	WELLS-BANK (UNITED)	1.1	8.47	4	800	2408	1.76	1.80	1.73	1.77	+ .01	1.761	.040
1.350	1.210	PHILADELPHIA INV. BK.	-	0.00	34	15525	19985	1.28	1.32	1.26	1.30	+ .02	1.207	.155
BANKS SECTOR														
					457	1316681	458747	INDEX NUMBER		197.04		CHANGE 1+ 1.28%		
2.020	1.940	JOR. PHENIX INSUR.	5.4	10.47	18	4000	7640	1.94	1.96	1.89	1.91	- .03	1.910	.102
2.050	1.900	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	7.7	7.80	1	1000	2050	2.00	2.05	2.05	2.05	+ .05	2.050	.050
INSURANCE SECTOR														
					19	5000	9690	INDEX NUMBER		120.86		CHANGE 1+ 0.08%		
1.710	1.610	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.3	7.36	48	32374	52681	1.68	1.64	1.63	1.63	- .05	1.632	.115
8.450	7.000	JOR. HOTEL TOURISM	17.7	1.99	9	67750	723738	8.45	8.25	8.05	8.25	- .20	8.248	1.145
1.650	1.600	UNION ELECTRICITY	5.6	6.80	4	2350	3559	1.45	1.54	1.46	1.47	+ .01	1.516	.18
2.700	2.600	MINER MINERALS	12.3	5.50	1	500	1250	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.50	- .10	2.500	.29
4.900	4.450	ARAB TEL. BODIES	18.8	2.70	3	14100	49975	4.50	5.00	5.00	4.75	- .25	4.963	.97
2.680	2.500	SHIPPING LINES	18.9	7.75	1	250	645	2.55	2.58	2.58	2.50	- .07	2.580	.004
1.250	1.140	MAR. POLYFOLIO	-	0.00	194	94050	103944	1.14	1.26	1.16	1.23	+ .09	1.237	1.681
.810	.620	JORDAN LITH. TRAD.	31.8	0.00	4	900	578	.68	.65	.62	.62	- .04	.542	.25
.500	.410	MAR. REP. SERV. MAR.	-	0.00	3	450	210	.42	.47	.45	.47	+ .04	.467	.038
1.680	1.490	MID. EAST. HOTELS	68.1	0.00	10	5750	9164	1.63	1.40	1.58	1.58	- .05	1.594	.13
3.540	3.430	ARAB INTL. INV. TRUST	15.8	5.71	8	5645	19055	3.54	3.50	3.50	3.50	- .04	3.500	.054
1.080	1.040	BANKA EDUCATION	-	0.00	25	8350	8726	1.04	1.06	1.02	1.05	- .01	1.045	.186
2.220	1.990	UNIFIED CO.	11.5	4.57	143	214150	664827	2.02	2.23	2.06	2.19	+ .13	2.171	4.283
.900	.850	UNION LACED DEV.	-	0.00	7	6550	5562	.88	.88	.85	.85	- .03	.851	.133
SERVICE SECTOR														
					520	452959	1654011	INDEX NUMBER		113.95		CHANGE 1- 1.21%		
1.020	1.020	ATTACHEES	-	0.00	4	1700	1702	1.02	1.01	1.00	1.09	- .02	1.001	.061
3.520	3.300	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	19.0	3.00	77	54302	215995	3.45	3.40	3.33	3.33	- .12	3.361	.106
1.500	1.300	JOR. FERTILIZER INDUS.	25.5	0.00	12	35200	116135	1.50	1.33	1.17	1.30	- .20	1.399	.080
5.000	5.700	ARAB PETROL CO.	16.9	3.50	3	550	3071	5.70	5.45	5.57	5.58	- .12	5.504	.001
9.750	9.550	JOR. TELECOM. SERVICES	9.9	8.15	100	19758	194273	9.55	10.04	9.57	9.82	- .27	9.833	.109
7.000	7.000	JORDAN TRADING	5.9	5.43	5	525	4063	7.00	6.65	6.40	6.40	- .50	6.501	.153
1.300	1.210	MOHAMED INDUSTRIES	55.5	0.00	10	1850	2324	1.21	1.27	1.25	1.25	+ .04	1.256	.185
2.270	2.500	INDUSTRIAL COMM. SER.	35.0	0.00	17	2462	6622	2.68	2.74	2.60	2.69	- .08	2.690	.019
7.150	7.150	JOR. WORTED MILLS	8.8	3.65	2	150	1023	7.15	6.85	5.80	5.85	- .30	6.920	.004
3.750	3.440	ARAB PHARM. IND.	19.4	5.65	65	22469	80659	3.50	3.53	3.50	3.54	+ .04	3.590	.250
5.200	5.950	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	7.3	4.24	2	125	738	5.95	5.90	5.90	5.90	- .05	5.904	.005
2.270	2.200	JORDAN BAKRY	12.8	6.02	3	1050	3210	2.20	2.30	2.20	2.20	- .10	2.200	.40
1.570	1.430	JOR. STEEL WORKS	9.0	7.36	12	3250	5343	1.55	1.55	1.63	1.63	- .02	1.644	.100
1.630	1.380	RAFTA INDUSTRIES	174.6	0.00	1	200	276	1.43	1.38	1.38	1.38	- .05	1.380	.020
5.000	4.810	DAR ALDINAR DIV. INV.	12.4	4.07	5	4250	20792	4.95	4.95	4.85	4.51	- .04	4.092	.071
3.850	3.450	ARAB ALUM. IND.	9.0	8.24	19	4182	15277	2.85	2.70	3.54	2.54	- .21	3.553	.070
.670	.850	ALUMINUM & POLYMER	0.00	0.00	238	32480	206575	.85	.55	.51	.62	- .04	.594	.924
1.190	1.120	ARAB BANK CORP. TRD.	7.9	8.85	111	42850	74687	1.12	1.22	1.14	1.17	- .05	1.188	.003
1.270	1.180	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	-	0.00	5	15950	19858	1.18	1.27	1.24	1.27	+ .09	1.245	.099
.770	.520	NATIONAL STEEL	10.4	8.57	155	155600	108888	.70	.72	.68	.70	- .02	.700	.293
1.190	1.030	INTERBANK, PERSO. CHEN.	-	0.00	132	49300	54990	1.03	1.15	1.08	1.11	+ .08	1.115	1.133
.920	.860	JOR. POLYMER INDUS.	145.5	0.00	10	3200	2652	.86	.86	.86	.86	- .03	.859	.107
2.970	2.800	UNION CHEN. INDUS.	77.5	0.00	1	150	460	2.83	2.93	2.92	2.93	- .01	2.929	.019
2.800	2.400	WALC-CABLE WIRE-MATC	15.8	0.00	10	1430	2685	2.75	2.51	2.54	2.59	- .16	2.577	.029
.800	.780	JOR. SULPHUR-CHEN.	-	0.00	5	1550	1302	.89	.86	.83	.83	- .06	.840	.039
1.560	1.310	ARAB PHARM. CHEN.	26.8	0.00	96	39637	56643	1.32	1.47	1.37	1.43	+ .10	1.428	.792
1.190	1.170	UNIV. WASH. DIV. INV.	5.2	5.2	82	13773	41911	1.74	1.80	1.73	1.73	- .01	1.763	.475
1.350	1.250	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	26.2	0.00	56	31373	40702	1.27	1.31	1.28	1.29	- .02	1.297	.92
1.040	.910	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.5	0.00	159	107900	102256	.92	.97	.93	.94	+ .01	.940	1.349
1.980	1.910	EL-MAY READY WEAR	122.8	0.00	21	28078	53940	1.51	1.54	1.51	1.51	- .01	1.521	.468
1.230	1.190	UNIV. TORONCO	30.6	0.00	60	72727	48522	1.32	1.31	1.29	1.30	- .02	1.304	.772
1.050	.940	UNION CR. & VER.	23.6	0.00	13	8050	7894	1.00	1.01	.96	.96	- .04	.961	.220
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR														
					1446	1055701	1495565	INDEX NUMBER		113.42		CHANGE 1- 2.26%		
GRAND TOTAL					2552	2040351	7558012	INDEX NUMBER		152.05		CHANGE 1- 0.27%		
NO. OF DAYS TRADED : 5														
AVG. AVERAGE OF TRADING VOLUME : JD 1,511,621														
AVG. AVERAGE OF TRADED SHARES : 568,070														
AVG. AVERAGE OF CONTRACTS : 510														
PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (04/01/1997 - 08/01/1997)														
WEEKLY REPORT														
RANKING THE LAST 3 WEEKS														
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	MARKET TURNOVER
.570	.500	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	21.2	0.00	2	650	345	.53	.52	.53	.52	-	.531	.020
.580	.500	JOR. TRADE C.	16.1	0.00	47	28600	15648	.50	.54	.50	.53	+ .02	.526	.705
.480	.400	ARAB TR. INVEST.	0.00	0.00	144	221300	101220	.43	.47	.43	.47	+ .04	.457	2.212
.740	.720	UNION INV. 504	69.8	0.00	20	74052	16472	.72	.73	.72	.73	-	.722	.337
1.350	1.670	SARA FOR INVESTMENT	3.00	0.00	2	5000	7605	1.55	1.53	1.52	1.53	- .02	1.521	.020
.700	.670	AL-DAMIYAH 752	15.6	0.00	8	1646	711	.67	.65	.58	.65	+ .02	.638	.012
.670	.590	ARAB TRCO 5 HSD.	-	0.00	18	10000	5937	.60	.65	.60	.65	+ .05	.625	.371
.520	.450	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	-	0.00	66	126737	65450	.48	.53	.48	.53	+ .05	.516	.538
.380	.310	JOR. ENG. MACH. JENCO	-	0.00	5	5600	3940	.32	.35	.34	.35	+ .02	.346	.339
1.450	1.320	MAR. C. FLORIDA	-	0.00	37	28700	18990	1.32	1.42	1.34	1.41	+ .08	1.290	.399
.610	.550	MAR. TRAVEL	-	0.00	24	10500	5950	.55	.58	.55	.57	+ .02	.568	.420
.540	.450	MAR. OILS & FLOURS	-	0.00	9	3350	1229	.48	.55	.48	.55	+ .07	.526	.157
.770	.740	JORDAN COPEX	-	0.00	23	17423	13117	.77	.77	.75	.75	- .02	.763	.464
.500	.500	ARAB ELECT. INDUS.	145.4	0.00	2	4100	2050	.50	.50	.50	.50	-	.500	.068
1.070	1.030	UNION TORONCO 752	-	0.00	9	5098	6076	1.03	1.05	1.05	1.05	+ .02	.800	.102
.620	.580	RAZI PHARM. 654	-	0.00	21	14150	3659	.58	.60	.59	.60	+ .02	.244	.142
.450	.390	EL-F. E	26.5	0.00	13	38000	4967	.46	.46	.43	.42	- .02	.427	1.545
.850	.750	IND. C. FLORIDA	-	0.00	13	1135	14007	.77	.80	.70	.80	+ .03	.782	.464
.520	.440	I. TRAVEL MARY.	-	0.00	5	560	252	.49	.47	.63	.63	- .06	.650	.022
.760	.600	PEAK SAM. P. CONV.	-	0.00	2	100	72	.73	.73	.73	.73	-	.730	.003
.660	.630	MAR. POLYMER	-	0.00	4	1550	1018	.63	.55	.63	.66	+ .03	.657	.016
.700	.650	MID-EAST COMPLEX	8.4	0.00	28	71500	50659	.67	.73	.65	.72	+ .05	.710	1.239
1.020	.900	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	71.6	0.00	15	50950	98954							

Australian Open ravaged by injury toll

MELBOURNE (R) — World tennis number four Yevgeny Kafelnikov on Friday joined a growing casualty list of top seeds as injury ravaged the field before the start of the Australian Open.

Kafelnikov was forced to pull out of the year's first Grand Slam with a broken hand, while doubts surrounded the fitness of fellow seeds Jim Courier and Thomas Enqvist.

The French Open champion's withdrawal removed one potential threat to Pete Sampras, the world No. 1 and top seed, before the tournament starts Monday.

Sampras, who won in Melbourne three years ago and is chasing his second successive grand slam title after his U.S. Open triumph last year, will play a qualifier after the first round draw was made Friday.

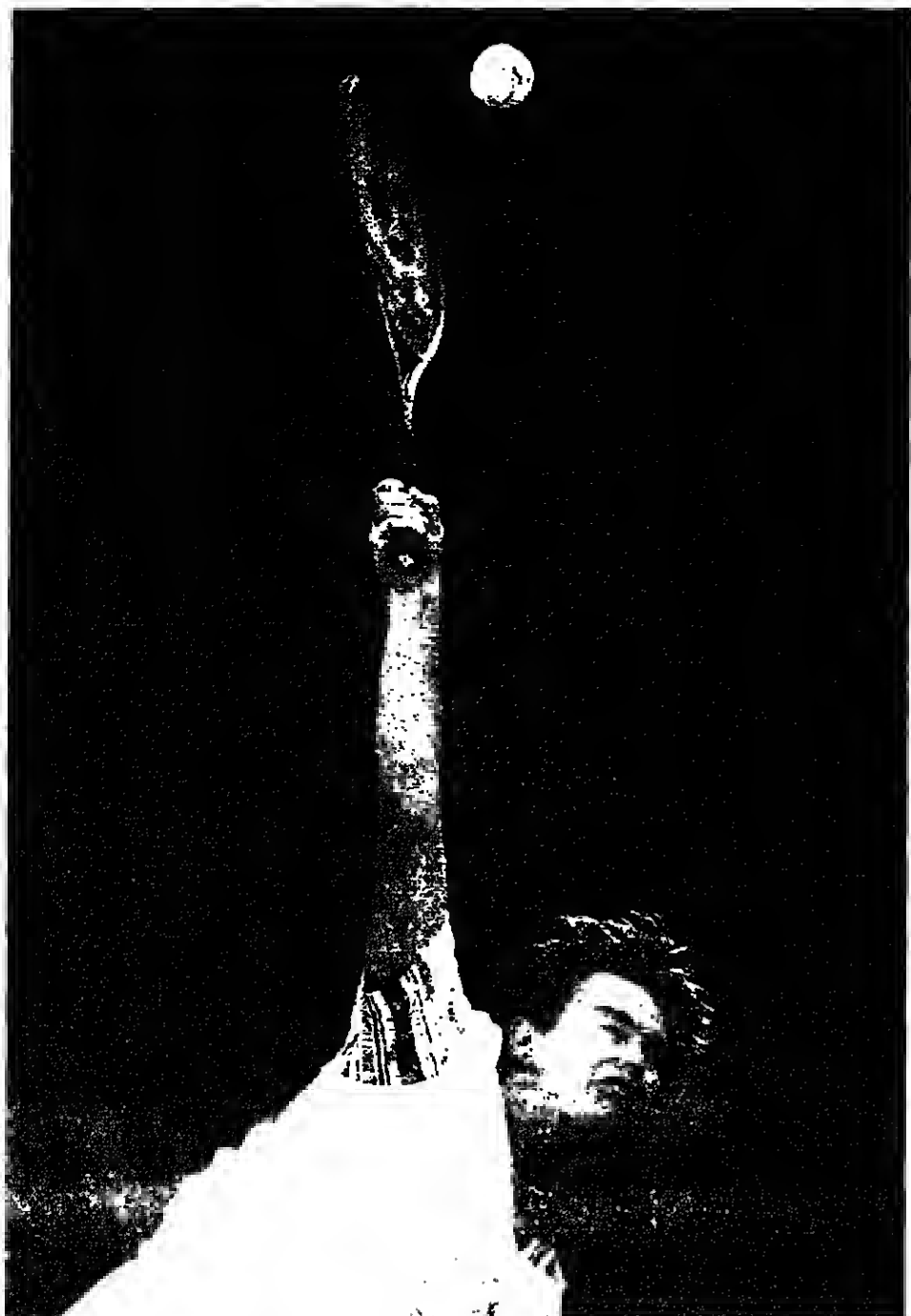
Defending Australian Open champion Boris Becker was handed a tougher assignment when the computer paired him with improving young Spaniard Carlos Moya, ranked 28 in the world.

Becker, the sixth seed here and a six-time Grand Slam winner, lost in three sets against Moya at last year's Paris Open, their only previous meeting.

"Carlos is not a typical Spanish clay court player because he is able to play on quicker surfaces, which is going to make it more dangerous," Becker told reporters.

In the women's draw, World No. 1, top seed and overwhelming favorite Steffi Graf will play Janette Husarova of Slovakia in the first round.

Swiss teenager Martina Hingis, seeded four and regarded as the biggest threat to stop the German winning her fifth Australian Open, was drawn in the opposite half of the draw,



Martina Hingis

clearing the way for a possible final showdown.

In a further boost for tournament officials, Sampras and Becker, whose rivalry last season enlivened the sport in the wake of Andre Agassi's

decline, were also kept apart in the draw and can only meet here in the final on January 26.

If Sampras beats the qualifier and the next two matches go his way as expected, his first seeded

opponent should be number 16 Alberto Berasategui of Spain in the fourth round.

Kafelnikov, who was competing this week at the Colonial Classic warm-up exhibition event, suffered the fracture in an accident

while training in the gymnasium on Thursday, Classic organiser Colin Stubs said.

"Yevgeny has been to a surgeon and it's a pretty bad break. He is going to be out for four to six weeks," said Stubs. The Russian right-hander, he said, was too upset to speak to media.

Former world No. 1 Courier, the Australian Open champion in 1992 and 1993 and seeded 11 this year, pulled out of his game at the Classic on Friday because of hamstring strain, Stubs said.

Seventh seed Enqvist was sidelined on Thursday with a badly infected blister on his right hand, raising doubt over whether the Swede will be ready to take his place in the Open.

Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands, U.S. player Todd Martin and 1993 Wimbledon finalist Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic had already been forced out through injury.

Two top players who have so far survived the injury carnage — second seed Michael Chang and fifth seed Thomas Muster — will also play qualifiers in a gentle introduction against players ranked outside the top 100.

Graf, whose prospects improved when rival Monica Seles was prevented from playing because of a broken finger, is scheduled to face her first serious challenge against 12th seed Amanda Coetzer of South Africa in the fourth round.

Women's second seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain plays Italian Gloria Pizzichini, while Hingis drew experienced German Barbara Rittner.

The draw was made by computer for the first time in Grand Slam history.

Sampras has final test today

MELBOURNE (R) — World No. 1 Pete Sampras will be given a stern test of his readiness for next week's Australian Open when he plays fellow American Michael Chang in the final of a warm-up exhibition event on Saturday.

Sampras, the top seed in the Melbourne Grand Slam starting on Monday, will try to prevent Open second seed Chang from winning his third Colonial Classic title in a row.

Sampras advanced without hitting a ball at Kooyong on Friday when World No. 4 Yevgeny Kafelnikov was forced to withdraw because of a broken hand.

"Michael is a true test to see where I am at," Sampras said of his meeting with compatriot Chang, the World No. 2.

"He plays very well in Australia and we will see how it goes out there. It's obviously not a Grand Slam final so I want to make sure I'm hitting the ball well and feeling fit and obviously ready to go on Monday," Sampras said.

Chang, who lost to Boris Becker in the Australian Open final last January and is seeded second this year, beat the German on Thursday in the other semi-final.

The fractured bone in



World No. 1 Pete Sampras of the U.S. wipes the sweat from his face during his match against France's Arnaud Boetsch at the Colonial Classic in Melbourne. Sampras defeated Boetsch in straight sets, after his original opponent Yevgeny Kafelnikov withdrew from the Classic and the Australian Open after injuring his hand in a gymnasium accident (Reuters photo)

Kafelnikov's right hand has been decimated by injuries, forcing organisers to pull out of the Open. The exhibition event has been shortened.

Henman beats top seed Ivanisevic in Open warm-up

SYDNEY (R) — World No. 3 Goran Ivanisevic was beaten in the semifinals of the Sydney International Tournament by Briton Tim Henman on Friday, upsetting his preparations for next week's Australian Open.

Top seed Ivanisevic, who has yet to win a Grand Slam title, lost 4-6 7-6 6-1 as Henman reached his second successive ATP tour final.

The women's final of the last warm-up event before the open will feature Swiss teenager Martina Hingis and American Jennifer Capriati.

Hingis, widely regarded as the chief threat to world No. 1 Steffi Graf in the Melbourne Grand Slam, defeated unseeded American Mary Joe Fernandez 6-3 6-2.

Capriati proved too strong for compatriot Lindsay Davenport, winning 2-6 6-4 6-2 at White City.

Henman, who lost to American Jim Courier in Qatar on Sunday in his first ATP tour final appearance, will face fellow non-seed Carlos Moya of Spain for the Sydney title on Saturday.

Ivanisevic fell away badly in the third set, prompting

speculation about his motivation with the start of the Australian Open only three days away.

"I'm aware it was pretty clear that Goran was getting frustrated," said Henman. "But at the end of the day you've got to concentrate on what you're doing."

Moya, who will play defending champion Boris Becker in the first round at the Open, warmed up with a convincing 3-6 6-3 7-6 win over compatriot and third seed Albert Costa in their semifinal.

Capriati, who won this event in 1993 at the age of 16 before quitting the tour, is looking for her first tournament success since returning to full-time tennis. "It's like I'm just starting my career now as a different person, just because I'm older," Capriati said. "It's just great being in the finals and playing well."

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Expressions of Interest REFERENCE: UNESCO-IRQ01

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) intends to create in Iraq, limited local assembly capacity of 6,000 high quality, single panel, 1.2 x 2.4 m. wall fixed chalkboards using imported materials. The basic material will be interior quality 10 mm chip board, average density 500 kg/m³, framed with a chalk and dust tray on the bottom edge. Protective covering will be provided for the back of boards against damp, wear, padding against non-uniform wall etc. A front surface will be permanently affixed to provide a long lasting durable writing surface. All glues, screws, fixations, tools and other accessories or materials needed to construct and erect the chalk board must be proposed. Interested potential bidders should apply as soon as possible with proof of their experience and full commercial references to:

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Potential bidders will be informed in due course whether they have been retained.

Expressions of Interest REFERENCE: UNESCO-IRQ02

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) will be contracting for the importation into Iraq of raw materials up to a value of \$4,000,000 for the building of new schools, rehabilitation of existing schools and local manufacture of school furniture and related items. Delivery of these materials will be phased over a three-month period.

Interested potential bidders should apply, supplying proof of relevant contracting experience and full commercial references to:

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Qualified potential bidders will be provided with a provisional list of required supplies and quantities and will be required to confirm their participation, bearing in mind that, in view of the destination, turnkey contracting arrangements will be concluded, including delivery of the contracted materials to specific destinations within Iraq.

Wednesday, July 8, 1996

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARRIF & TANIAH HIRSH

A BIDDER'S NIGHTMARE

Both vulnerable. South deals

NORTH
♠ 9 5 4
♥ 10 9 8 3
♦ 10 8 5 3
♣ A 9 7

EAST
♠ 10 8 6 3
♥ 7 6 5 2
♦ 7 6 5
♣ 10 2

SOUTH
♠ A K Q
♥ A K Q
♦ A K Q
♣ A 8 6 4 3

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
SNT Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♠

There is no doubt that bidding in bridge is ever more becoming a science. However, once in a while a hand comes along that gives a shudder to those of us who do not have the time or the energy to become involved in the myriad of conventions and gadgets necessary to achieve the optimum results in the auction. The scientists would suffer the same result as we mere mortals. This hand cropped up in a major duplicate pairs event. Consider the South hand. Give North a singleton club and five cards in any suit headed by the

Jack, and again in North's long suit would require little more than normal distribution to be a laydown. However, how to get there is another matter.

Most South players chose to open the bidding with three no trump for the equivalent. That would instantly rule out a slam should North have a singleton club and a long suit. To make matters worse, those players who declared the no-trump game were defeated when West cashed five club tricks. Indeed, one West chose to initialize declarer by leading a "fourth-best" jack of clubs, giving declarer the false hope that something good was likely to happen in the club suit. Nothing did. Three North-South pairs had a bidding accident and stopped in two no trump! That unfairly earned a top score, since declarer lost only the five club tricks.

Four players decided that they did not want to open three no-trump without a sure stopper in the club suit. They chose to open one club, and were horrified when the bidding died there.

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Juninho boosts World Cup ambitions

MIDDLESBROUGH (R) — Juninho believes Middlesbrough's League Cup quarter-final victory over Liverpool has given him the springboard to secure his World Cup place.

The little Brazilian has never shared unsettled compatriot Emerson's unhappiness at Middlesbrough. But he was becoming alarmed at the way the club's season was sliding into disaster.

"Brazil have many new players to pick from and I need Middlesbrough to be winning games to maintain my status in the international team," he said after the 2-1 win over Liverpool on Tuesday.

"I am very excited at the prospect of playing in the World Cup next year in France so it is important 'Boro do well. I said when I joined Middlesbrough that I came here to be successful. I am determined to win things and I would love to start by winning the League Cup at Wembley."

Juninho discounted rumours of widespread disquiet among manager Bryan Robson's foreign imports after just one victory in their last 15 Premier League games.

"I enjoy the atmosphere in the dressing room," he said. "It is very important that there is a good team spirit, with a lot of humour."

"We don't just see each other when we are playing or training. We like to all go out for a meal together or meet socially with family and friends. It helps bring everybody together."

الأردن مستشفى

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& Julia Ormond.....in
FIRST KNIGHT

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:699238
PLAZA

* The Hunchback of
Notre Dame
Shows: 12:00, 1:30, 5:00
* RANSOM
Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:677420
CONCORD

CONCORD "1"
Sylvester Stallone & Curt Russell...in
TANGO & CASH
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CONCORD "2"
Dumb and Dumber
Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

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Sweden's Pernilla Wiberg speeds down the track to clock the fastest time in the first practice for the two ladies' World Cup downhill races scheduled for Friday and Saturday. Wiberg clocked a time of 1:45.85 minutes (Reuters photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Becker to play in EC tournament

ANTWERP (R) — Australian Open champion Boris Becker will play in next month's European Community Championship (ECC), organisers said on Thursday. "This is our greatest satisfaction. He was the first one to register and didn't ask for anything," tournament director Georges Baudewyns said. The field of the \$1.0 million tournament, famous for a diamond-encrusted golden trophy, also includes World No. 4 Yevgeny Kafelnikov and defending champion Michael Stich. Other entries in the February 17-23 tournament include Swedish World No. 9 Thomas Enqvist and No. 11 Marcelo Rios of Chile. Baudewyns said several Grand Slam winners had expressed interest in the two remaining wild cards but stopped short of naming Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek and World No. 1 Pete Sampras. "I'm not allowed to," he said when asked why he declined to name Krajicek and Sampras. The Antwerp trophy, shaped like a racket, is the prize for anyone who wins the event three times in five years.

Leeds sign Molenaar

AMSTERDAM (R) — English Premier League side Leeds have signed Robert Molenaar, a defender with Dutch First Division club Volendam, on a three-and-a-half-year contract, Dutch ANP news agency said on Thursday. Molenaar, voted Volendam's player of the year last season, is expected to make his debut on Saturday against Leicester. ANP said no financial details of the transfer had been disclosed.

Yankees sign Whiten, re-sign Sojo

NEW YORK (R) — The New York Yankees continued retooling for the 1997 season by signing free agent outfielder Mark Whiten and re-signing utility infielder Luis Sojo on Thursday to one-year contracts. Whiten, 30, split the 1996 season with Philadelphia, Atlanta and Seattle, batting a combined .262 with 22 homers and 71 RBI in 136 games. He is best known for blasting four homers and driving in 12 runs for St. Louis in Cincinnati in 1993. Sojo, 31, was acquired off waivers from Seattle last August and hit .275 with two doubles and five RBI in 18 games for the Yanks. In 95 games overall last year, he batted .220.

'I can win in the Arrows car,' says Hill

BIRMINGHAM, England (R) — World Formula One champion Damon Hill is confident he can finish on the winner's podium with his new team, Arrows.

Hill, making a special appearance at an international motor show to show off the new Arrows Yamaha A18 car on which his season's hopes rest, said on Thursday: "I know I can win in this car."

"I've been through a good period celebrating the championship but I've had enough champagne and I'm now raring to get back on the track and start racing again."

"The car's very slim, very impressive...it's a state-of-the-art piece of machinery." But how the car competes with the leading F1 teams, including Williams who did not renew Hill's contract after his title-winning season, remains to be seen.

Hill, replaced at Williams by Heinz-Harald Frentzen, is cautiously optimistic. "It's going to be a lot of hard work but I've never been more motivated and I still want to win races," he said. "I've got an incredible winning record and I certainly don't want to see that

Robson happy at Barcelona

BARCELONA (R) — Former England coach Bobby Robson is happy to finish his contract with Barcelona rather than take over from Kevin Keegan at Newcastle United.

Although "flattered" at reports linking him with the Newcastle job, in a statement on Thursday issued through sky sports he said: "At the moment I am on a two-year contract with the biggest and best club in the world and I have to say that I am happy here."

Barcelona vice-president Joan Gaspart said earlier: "Robson, who is a complete gentleman, called me personally on Wednesday and said that they (two Newcastle representatives) had telephoned him and wanted to come and see him."

According to Gaspart, Robson was prepared to listen to a possible offer, but would explain that he was very happy at Barcelona.

Gaspart added that Robson, 63, had said he not only wanted to stay in Spain, but also wished to bring "titles and victories" to Barcelona.

Earlier, in London, a big bookmaking firm dramatically stopped taking bets on the next Newcastle manager after Robson's and midfielder Peter Beardsley odds dropped from 12-1 to 2-1 joint favourites.

"Basically we are of the opinion that there are now certain people out there who know more than we do," explained William Hill spokesman Graham Sharpe.

"It appears that the Newcastle board may have drawn up a short-list and from the betting patterns we have observed today, our original odds-on favourite, Kenny Dalglish, is not on it."

"The vast majority of the cash we have been taking has been for two contenders, Bobby Robson and Peter Beardsley. We have a potential pay-out of almost 100,000 pounds on either

Robson or Beardsley."

There has also been betting support for Robson's fellow exile in Spain, John Toshack, who is set to leave Deportivo at the end of the season and is reported to have had talks with Newcastle chairman Sir John Hall.

Toshack, who starred alongside Keegan in one of the great Liverpool sides in the 1970s, sought to play down speculation regarding a move to Newcastle, but perhaps significantly, refused to rule himself out of the job.

"At the weekend I announced I would probably not be renewing my contract at Deportivo," Toshack said on BBC Radio.

"Then, with Keegan resigning a couple of days later, people may be thinking that our relationship is such that we speak more often than we do and are putting two and two together."

"I have a contract till June 30, which in normal circumstances I would expect to fulfill. To be honest, I don't know where I'll be working after that."

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Receptionist/Ward Clerk: Computer skills; English fluency; experience in admission/discharge preferable.

Social Worker: BSc in Sociology or related fields; at least 2 year experience in social work or hospitals.

Librarian: BSc or diploma in related fields; at least 5 years experience in libraries (preferably medical); English fluency.

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Magic, Jazz and Nets lose

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (R) — Tom Gugliotta scored nine of his 26 points in the fourth quarter as the surging Minnesota Timberwolves held on for a 110-107 victory over the New Jersey Nets on Thursday.

Rookie Stephon Marbury scored 22 points and had seven assists despite fouling out with 6:58 to go for Minnesota, which has won seven of its last nine games. "He wanted to play really well," Minnesota coach Flip Saunders said of Marbury. "His fifth foul was a stupid foul, but 19-year-olds do that."

The Timberwolves shot 50 per cent (39-of-78) from the field and a torrid 67 per cent (8-of-12) from long range.

In Orlando, Mookie Blaylock had 13 points, eight assists and seven steals and made a pair of big plays in overtime to lift the Atlanta Hawks to their fourth straight victory, 97-92 over the Orlando Magic.

Steve Smith scored 27 points and Henry James added a season-high 20 for the Hawks, who held the Magic to one field goal in the extra session.

Horace Grant had 24 points and 12 rebounds and Rony Seikaly added 22 points for the Magic.

In Toronto, Damon Stoudamire scored 27 points, including eight in a key 18-2 run late in the fourth quarter, to lift the Toronto Raptors to a 110-96 victory over the Utah Jazz.

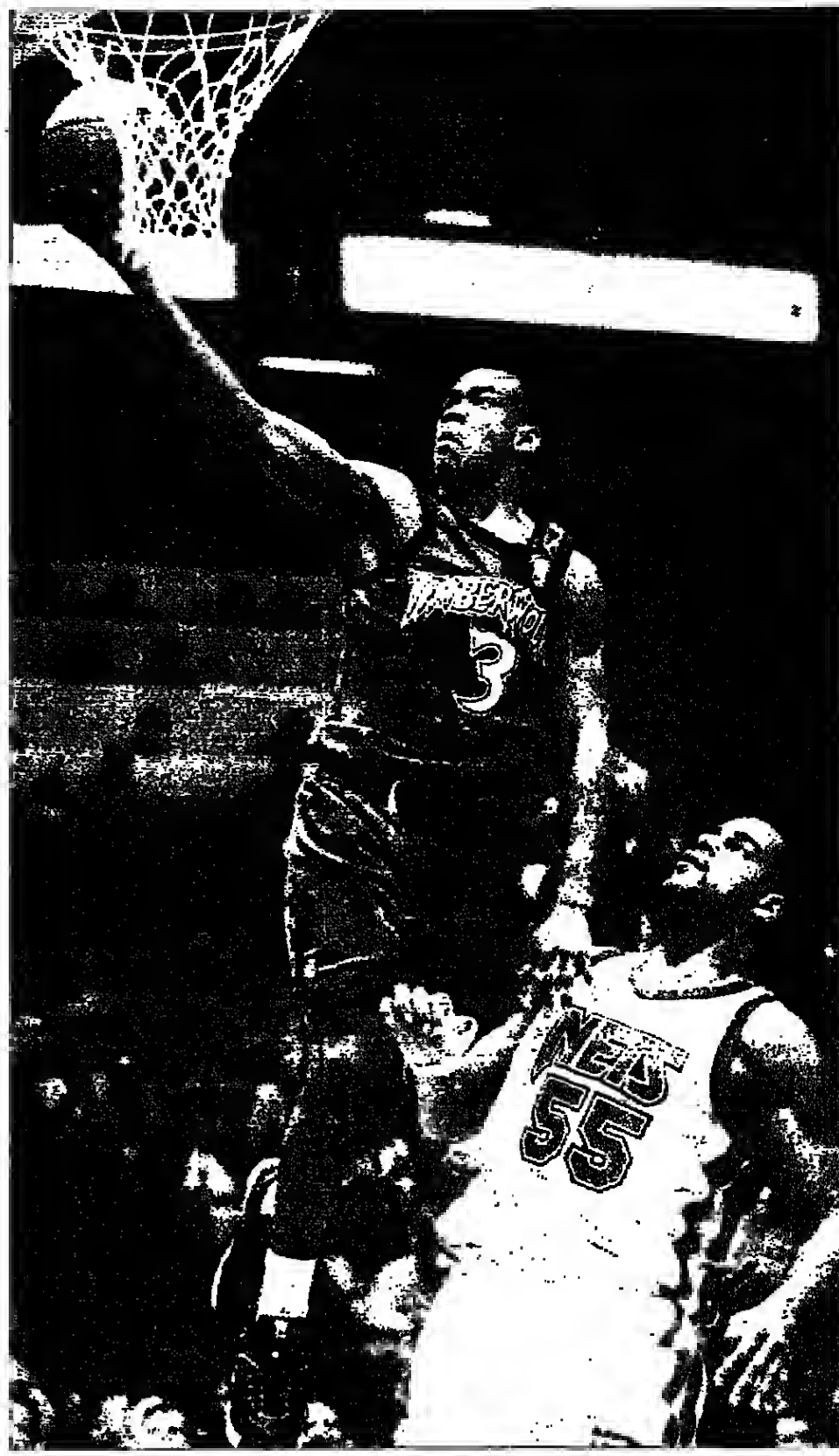
Doug Christie added 22 points and 10 assists, and Walt Williams had 17 points and eight rebounds for Toronto, which snapped a four-game losing streak. The Raptors eclipsed the 100-point mark for the first time this season.

Karl Malone had 24 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists for Utah.

In Vancouver, Latrell Sprewell scored 27 points and Chris Mullin added eight of his 17 in the fourth quarter as the Golden State Warriors pulled away for a 102-86 victory over the Vancouver Grizzlies.

B.J. Armstrong scored 13 of his 15 points in the third quarter for the Warriors.

Rookie Shareef Abdur-Rahim scored 17 points for Vancouver, which went scoreless for four minutes of the final period.



Minnesota Timberwolves' guard Stephon Marbury (L) flies over New Jersey Nets' forward Jayson Williams in the first period of their NBA game at the Meadowlands Arena in East Rutherford. Minnesota beat New Jersey 110-107 (Reuters photo)

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Turkey renews threat to stage Cyprus attack

ANKARA (AFP) — Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller warned Friday that Turkey will not allow the Greek Cypriots to deploy long-range missiles despite a U.S. call to refrain from threats to attack the divided Mediterranean island.

Turkish Cypriot Rauf Denktaş, meanwhile, threatened to send settlers into the deserted Greek Cypriot coastal resort of Varosha, which would in effect scuttle any chances of a political settlement to end the division of Cyprus.

"It is out of the question for these missiles to be deployed," Mrs. Ciller, who is also deputy prime minister, told a press conference.

Turkey "will not remain idle and allow the island to be transformed into a powder-keg," she said. Her country would "do what is necessary, even if that means strikes."

The U.S. State Department warned Turkey on Thursday to stop threatening military action if the Greek Cypriots go ahead with the deployment of the Russian S-300 missiles.

"It would be completely out of bounds for Turkey to take this action," said spokesman Nicholas Burns. "There is no reason for the Turkish government to threaten anybody."

Mrs. Ciller said Turkey has protested to Russia over the missile deal with Cyprus. The contract was announced last Saturday but the missiles are not expected to arrive for up to eight months.

Joining in the threats, Mr. Denktaş warned that the Turkish Cypriots would occupy Varosha if the missiles are deployed.

The resort, which the Turkish army has wired off since its 1974 invasion of the northern third of Cyprus, will be "integrated socially and economically to the Famagusta region," he said, quoted by the Turkish Cypriot news agency TAK.

Mr. Denktaş also said he was withdrawing support for a package of U.N. confidence-building measures. The proposals were "mean-

ingless ... given the bad intentions shown by the Greek Cypriots in buying the missiles," he said.

Under the proposals, Varosha was to be returned to the Greek Cypriots and Nicosia airport, also closed since 1974, reopened for use by both communities.

Amid the rising tension since the announcement of the S-300 contract, Turkish Defence Minister Turgut Tanay warned Wednesday that his country could strike southern Cyprus.

"We could do what we did in 1974," he said in a reference to Turkey's invasion. "If necessary, we could strike."

Nicosia says the missile system is purely defensive, but the United States and Britain maintain it will lead to an arms build-up which undermines efforts to end the 23-year division.

Turkish mainland forces invaded northern Cyprus after a coup in Nicosia backed by the military junta then ruling Greece. A breakaway Turkish-Cypriot state declared in 1983 is recognised only by Ankara.

Britain, the former colonial power in Cyprus, has called for restraint from all sides through its embassies in Athens and Ankara. The Foreign Office in London said Friday.

"We have stressed to the Turkish and Greek governments the need for a measured approach to this issue," it said. "We have called for restraint in public statements and for measures to reduce rather than increase tension."

Britain also urged the Greek Cypriot administration in Nicosia to "reconsider" the purchase of the missiles.

The Cypriot government said Thursday it is prepared to discuss a U.S.-proposed ban on military overflights of the island from Greece and Turkey, as State Department peace envoy Carey Cavanaugh heads to the region.

Mr. Cavanaugh is due in the Cypriot capital on Sunday before travelling on to Greece and Turkey.

Iranian exiles deny attacks from Iraq

NICOSIA (AFP) — Iran's main armed opposition group, the Mujahadeen-e-Khalq, denied on Friday government accusations that it was launching cross-border attacks from Iraq.

The group described the claims as "absurd" and said they came from a "faltering regime which is terrified of the prowess of a democratic alternative," in a statement received in Nicosia.

An intelligence official, quoted in Iranian newspapers on Thursday, said several rebel groups had infiltrated Iran in the past two weeks to carry out "bombings and other terrorist acts in public places."

The rebels crossed at different points along the border, but several of them were killed and the rest arrested, he said without giving figures. "Our heroic border residents" prevented them from completing their missions.

The Iraqi-based Mujahadeen said the Iranian government was preparing the ground for further attacks against it in Iraq, and warned of more arrests and executions in Iran.

"Neither their desperate attempts, nor their anti-human atrocities can cure any of the problems of the mullahs ruling Iran," the group said.

Iraq for its part blamed Iran on Wednesday for the previous day's mortar attack against the Mujahadeen offices in central Baghdad that killed at least one person, an Iraqi civilian, according to the group.

"All signs point to the involvement of the Iranian regime in this criminal attack," the Iraqi Interior Ministry said.

But Iran denied the accusations saying they were "unfounded, with the aim of turning [Iraqi] public opinion away from the country's internal problems."

The Mujahadeen themselves also implicated Tehran in the attack on their offices and said it had wounded dozens of Iraqis, including children.

Iran has in the past hit rebel bases inside Iraq in retaliation for cross-border attacks by the Mujahadeen or armed Iranian Kurdish guerrillas.

The Islamic republic, which fought a 1980-1988 war against Iraq, has repeatedly urged Baghdad to end its support for the Mujahadeen and other armed guerrillas to pave the way for normalising ties.

The Iraqi newspaper on Thursday published the photograph of a dead man alleged to be a Mujahadeen member, and asked the public to help identify him. He was sprawled on grass and had a pistol in his hand.

The authorities in Kermanshah, western Iran, said Monday that three Mujahadeen rebels had been killed after hitting mines laid in border regions with Iraq.

A day earlier, they said two rebels had been killed in clashes with security forces and one captured in southwestern Khuzestan province. There were other clashes previously.



Israeli policeman stand guard as Palestinians perform prayers outside the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron on Friday, the first day of the Holy Month of Ramadan. Hundreds of Palestinians themselves had to pray outside the mosque, which was packed by worshippers inside (Reuters photo)

First Ramadan prayers at Al Aqsa held under tight security

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A Muslim cleric called on 80,000 faithful gathered at Al Aqsa mosque Friday to pray for the "liberation of Jerusalem" as Muslims worldwide began the Holy fasting month of Ramadan.

In a militant sermon, Sheikh Ahmad Bitawi denounced a New Year's day shooting spree by an Israeli soldier in Hebron which wounded six Palestinians and condemned Israeli policies "in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon."

The cleric called for Muslims to seek "the liberation of Jerusalem" from Israeli rule and told them to pray for rain to end a drought which has been threatening agriculture in the region.

Israel deployed 3,000 policemen backed up by helicopters around the Al Aqsa Mosque compound to prevent possible unrest after Friday's services, but the faithful dispersed without incident, officials said.

The first weekly prayers of Ramadan traditionally see large numbers of faithful praying at Al Aqsa, the third holiest site of Islam, but tensions were higher than usual

following a double bomb attack in Tel Aviv on Thursday night that wounded 13 people.

No one had claimed responsibility for the pipe bombings by Friday but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu blamed Palestinian radicals for the attack, the first bombing in Israel since his right-wing government came to power in June.

Police officials said they had no specific information on possible trouble after Friday prayers, but feared anti-Israeli protests could erupt due to the generally tense situation and a deadlock in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

The month of Ramadan also often sees a surge in anti-Israeli attacks, in part because large numbers of Palestinians attend religious services where militant clerics often stir up nationalist emotions.

The national police issued a statement Friday warning that stern action would be taken against political unrest.

"The police will act aggressively and with determination to foil any attempt to violate the law or disturb public order during Ramadan," the statement said.

Lima hints at exile for rebels as a compromise to end embassy crisis

LIMA (AFP) — Peru's government, which has kept largely quiet during the hostage crisis here, has hinted at a partial solution to gain the freedom of 74 Japanese and South Americans held hostage for 23 days.

Peru's presidential Chief of Staff Alberto Pandolfi told reporters Peru was looking for a country that would be willing to take the 20-strong Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) unit that seized the Japanese ambassador's residence on Dec. 17.

"We would like to be discreet so when it is appropriate, we will inform the press which countries are prepared to take the rebels," he said in the first press conference by a senior Peruvian official since the crisis began.

"This could be a solution if and when all the hostages are released," Mr. Pandolfi said. Nerves were shattered in the pre-dawn hours Friday when Tupac Amaru rebels fired shots into the air in the second such incident this week.

Two rebels occupying the embassy residence fired two shots each into the air from underneath a large white tent set up in the garden for a gala reception interrupted when the rebels stormed the house, taking hundreds of hostages. The shots were fired at 2:43 a.m. (0743 GMT), police said.

Following the gunfire,

police sharpshooters took positions atop nearby homes and International Committee of the Red Cross officials approached the embassy residence to determine if anyone was injured.

On Tuesday three shots shattered the pre-dawn calm in what the Red Cross said was accidental fire by the rebels. And on Dec. 26, a blast at the embassy residence was blamed on a dog tripping a mine. No one was injured in either blast.

On Thursday, Mr. Pandolfi had also sought to calm talk of a military solution.

"A violent incursion is ruled out as long as the hostages are not physically harmed," he told a throng of reporters.

President Alberto Fujimori made a similar assurance Wednesday amid reports that elite air, land and sea troops were training for a possible assault on the compound.

In exchange for releasing the hostages, rebel leader Nestor Cerna Carotini has demanded the release of some 440 people convicted or jailed in connection with Tupac Amaru, safe passage into Peru's Amazon jungle and an easing of tough anti-inflation policies that have squeezed the poor. He has not publicly agreed to leave the country.

There had been press reports Thursday of other government overtures to jailed rebel leaders.

In Tokyo, Japan acknowl-

ed a possibility Friday that the rebels could agree to a safe exile in exchange for the release of 74 prominent Japanese, Peruvian and Bolivian hostages.

"I don't think it's a fixed plan. But we understand the Peruvian government sees it as an option," chief Cabinet Secretary Seioku Kajiyama told a news conference.

The only word from the rebels on Thursday was a placard placed in the window of the residence Thursday denying allegations that they were holding Peruvian, Japanese and Bolivian elite for ransom.

"Mr. Fujimori, don't lie. Money doesn't interest us. We demand the release of our prisoners," read one placard placed in the window.

There was also no immediate word on the release of a Japanese reporter and his Peruvian translator, both of whom were arrested Tuesday after slipping into the residence.

Mr. Pandolfi had said on Thursday that they would soon be released but they remained under arrest as of early Friday.

Tokyo's mainichi shimbun reported Dec. 25, quoting unnamed sources in Lima close to the Cuban government, that Havana was prepared to give asylum to the rebels holding hostages in Lima if Japan and Peru made an official request.

UAE, Iraqi officials hold talks on trade

CAIRO (Agencies) — In the first known visit by a United Arab Emirates (UAE) official to Iraq since the 1990 Gulf crisis, the UAE's director of ports met in Baghdad on Thursday with Iraq's transport minister.

The meeting between Sultan Ahmed Ben Saleem and Iraqi Transport Minister Ahmad Murtada Ahmed Khalil was reported by the official Iraqi News Agency and monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

The dispatch said Sheikh Ben Saleem offered the UAE's help in assuring the delivery of food and medicines to Iraq via the port of Dubai. It gave no other details.

The UAE has been among the few Arab states calling for reconciliation with Iraq. Its stance has not been appreciated by Kuwait, where seven months of Iraqi occupation were ended by the 1991 Gulf war.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have both argued that Iraq should remain isolated.

U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait have barred Iraq from selling oil, its economic mainstay.

The United Nations recently approved limited oil sales, which began last month, so Iraq could purchase needed food and medicine. UAE businesses hope to be involved in sales and transshipping.

Earlier this week, a ship set sail from the UAE for Iraq carrying 17 tonnes of baby milk and 15 tonnes of medicines as a donation to

Iraqi children. Money for the project came from Sheikh Mohammad Ben Rashed Al Maktoum, who is crown prince of Dubai and defence minister of the UAE.

Aziz due in Paris

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz will meet with French Prime Minister Alain Juppe and Foreign Minister Herve De Charene during a visit to Paris Tuesday, diplomats said.

The visit will be his third to France since the end of the 1991 Gulf war and the second since Jacques Chirac became French president in May 1995.

However, Mr. Aziz will not meet with Mr. Chirac during his one-day visit.

He last held talks in Paris in December 1995. His visit will come after France withdrew from the multinational force protecting Iraqi Kurds in north Iraq, which diplomats say was evidence of a thaw in bilateral relations.

France has sought for some time to persuade Iraq to implement the oil-for-food U.N. resolution enabling it to export \$2 billion of crude over six months in order to raise funds for much-needed food and medicine, and to respect all other U.N. resolutions. A U.N. official said Tuesday Iraqis suffering under more than six years of U.N. economic sanctions would start receiving extra food and medicine in March under the humanitarian deal with the United Nations.

Hamas marks anniversary of Ayyash assassination

NABLUS (AP) — Shouting for vengeance, thousands of supporters of the Hamas group attended a memorial rally Friday for a militant bomb-maker whose assassination a year ago they blamed on Israel.

More than 15,000 supporters, many waving Palestinian or green Islamic flags, called for attacks against Israel and sang militant songs. One poster declared: "The Palestinian land is thirsty for blood."

"We want a big attack," chanted the crowd.

The rally came a day after a twin bomb blast in Tel Aviv wounded 13 people. Israeli police suspect Palestinian militants, but have said they have no leads. No group has claimed responsibility, and Hamas speakers did not refer to the bombings during Friday's rally.

The Nablus rally also came on the first day of the fasting month of Ramadan, a time of increased religious fervor.

The Hamas bomb-maker, Yehya Ayyash, masterminded a series of explosions that killed dozens of Israelis. He

was killed by a rigged mobile phone on Jan. 5, 1996.

Hamas blamed Israel for the slaying and carried out four suicide bombings in February and March 1996, killing 63 people. The group has threatened fresh attacks to mark the anniversary of his death.

Speakers at the rally said Hamas would target the 145,000 Jewish settlers who live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"The way to resist the settlements is not through talk, but by turning their lives into hell," a Hamas leader, Ahmed Haj Ali, told the crowd. Behind him on the stage stood a four-metre-high drawing of Ayyash, flanked by two rifles.

Abdul Latif Ayyash, the bomb-maker's father, was greeted with cheers when he raised Ayyash's three-year-old son, Bara, in the air.

Youths sported green headbands, many with the inscription "Qassam," a reference to Hamas' armed wing, Izzedine Al Qassam.

'Carlos' seeks damages over book on his life

PARIS (R) — Guerrilla mastermind "Carlos the Jackal," calling himself a professional revolutionary, launched a legal bid on Friday to win 910,000 francs (\$170,000) damages over a book he says details his chances of a fair trial.

His lawyer Frederic Pariente said he wanted a court to hear the Venezuelan's charges against the book "Carlos: The Secret New-orks of International Terrorism," by journalist Bernad Violet and published by Seuil.

"I aim to submit the documents to the court today," Mr. Pariente told Reuters. It was unclear if the court would agree to a trial — Carlos lost a similar court action in October when he sought to get Mr. Violet's book banned.

In the new 12-page plea, Mr. Pariente argues that the book treats Carlos as responsible for a string of bombings and assassinations in France, violating his right to be considered innocent until proven guilty by a court.

Carlos, whose real name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, also complains the book violates strict French privacy laws, including its publication of his photograph on the front cover without his permission.

Carlos is requesting a total of 910,000 francs (\$170,000) in damages. Separately, he is seeking reimbursement of legal costs.

His legal complaint, in which Carlos lists his occupation as "professional revolutionary," says Mr. Violet's book illegally included confidential reports from the investigation, including French and former East German secret service documents.

Carlos, spirited out of Sudan to France in 1994, is now in a Paris prison.

He was convicted in his absence by a French court and sentenced to life in prison for the 1975 killings of two secret service agents and is being probed over a total of six bombings and killings in France.

Carlos's boldest attack was to lead the 1975 kidnapping of 11 oil ministers attending a conference in Vienna. France accuses him of killing 83 people in a series of attacks mostly in Europe and the Middle East.

COLUMN

In Antarctica, almost anything goes for a name

PALMER STATION, Antarctica (R) — There's a place called the Blob, another known as Blow-Me-Down Bluff and a prominent rock outcrop called Sore Thumb because it sticks out like one in the frozen wilderness. No other spot in the world has such odd names as Antarctica, where a century of explorers, adventurers and researchers have let their imaginations run riot when it comes to putting a moniker to a mountain or a label to a glacier. There's Mt. Wyatt, named by an admirer after 1950's Hollywood actress Jane Wyatt, a conical peak known as the Pimple, and a pair of rocky pinnacles known as the Office Girls, named by appreciative U.S. surveyors in honour of the secretarial staff back home.

Beepers go awry across U.S. for half-hour

NEW YORK (R) — Some 100,000 pagers rang wild across America, tossing a slumbering West Coast and making New York commuters wonder if "Road runner," the beeping cartoon character, had boarded their bus. The half-hour beeping spree that made some offices sound like a gerbil's convention was caused by a single wrong number punched into a computer system, a spokeswoman for the pager company Skytel said. Skytel, operated by the Mobile Telecommunications Technologies Corp., said an estimated 100,000 of its customers received between 20 and 25 erroneous beeps. An answering machine in the Baltimore area yielded the following recording: "Hi. No, I'm not paging you. There's something really crazy going on with the ... paging company. So please, please stop calling me. I'm so sorry about your pager going crazy and my pager going crazy and my phone line. Thank you very much."

Miami residents with street loot get amnesty

MIAMI (R) — Police gave Miami residents 48 hours to return hundreds of thousands of dollars that rained onto an impoverished neighbourhood after an armoured car crashed. The no-question asked amnesty, to end at midday (1700 GMT) on Saturday, was announced a day after an accident that some residents of the inner city overtown neighbourhood called a gift from God. During the Wednesday morning rush hour, a Brink's armoured security truck believed to be carrying \$3.7 million flipped on a highway overpass, cracked open and sent a river of bundled currency and coins on to a street below.

Earthlings to get first chance to call ET

PARIS (R) — Earthlings will get a first chance to send messages to space aliens this year on a rocket bound for Saturn's biggest moon, the European Space Agency (ESA) said. ESA said it would collect electronic signatures and messages and pack them onto a CD-ROM aboard the Huygens probe due to blast off on Oct. 6 for a seven-year voyage to Titan as a "token of human life" in deep space. It said the signatures and messages would be collected by ESA on a special site on the Internet computer network, "http://www. Huygens.com". They would be accepted until March 1.

Flemish farmer finds French a big help

BRUSSELS (R) — A Belgian Flemish beef farmer accused of using illegal hormones on his animals escaped the long arm of the law when a court ruled that the summons had been issued in the wrong language. Belga news agency said the summons had been issued in French during an inspection of cattle at the abattoir in the Brussels suburb of Anderlecht. Brussels is officially bi-lingual.